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Official Records

Fifty-fifth session

28th plenary meeting
Friday, 22 September 2000, 10 a.m.
New York

President Mr. Holkeri ..... (Finland)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Mungra (Suriname), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Agenda item 9 (*continued*)

General debate

The Acting President: I ask for the cooperation of all speakers in observing the voluntary 20-minute guideline for their statements. The full text of their statements will be distributed.

The first speaker is His Excellency Mr. Joseph Mutaboba, Chairman of the delegation of Rwanda.

Mr. Mutaboba (Rwanda) (*spoke in French*): May I first, on behalf of our Minister for Foreign Affairs, who could not be here, on behalf of my delegation and on my own behalf, join previous speakers in extending to the President our heartfelt congratulations on his election to preside over the fifty-fifth session.

In addition, I congratulate his eminent predecessor, Mr. Theo-Ben Gurirab, and the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, on the quality and great quantity of activities carried out during the recent Summit.

I also take this opportunity to congratulate and welcome Tuvalu, the 189th Member of our Organization. We hope that other potential Members, such as Western Sahara in Africa, will soon be able to join us.

The Millennium Summit — in which the Head of State of Rwanda, Mr. Paul Kagame participated — evaluated the twentieth century and formulated recommendations for enhancing the work of the Organization in the twenty-first century, now beginning. As a number of speakers emphasized, the twentieth century was the era both of great and unprecedented technological triumphs and of crises as great as the new means of destruction.

The distressing feature of the First and Second World Wars was that they made use of the advanced technologies of the late nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century to cause enormous human and material devastation. In 1918 and again in 1945 all humanity was overwhelmed by the terrifying consequences of a world war. "No more wars leading to the loss of millions of human lives"; "No more genocide": these were the calls of the founding countries of the United Nations when they met in San Francisco in October 1945.

Today, as in the past, the international community finds itself reliving horrors that it thought it had banished for ever, horrors that include the genocide in Rwanda in 1994. It certainly was not a lack of theoretical principles of public morality or international law that contributed to preventing or stopping this genocide. These principles had even been greatly strengthened in 1948 by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and had been widely diffused throughout the world by many organizations that took up the banner of human rights.

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The Brahimi report (A/55/305) was needed. We welcome its conclusions and recommendations, and take this occasion to warmly congratulate our Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, on having commissioned it and the two others that preceded it: the Srebrenica report and the courageous Carlsson report. Our Organization had its failures, but the Brahimi report tells us that we can do better in the future. To miss this unique opportunity to reflect on what must be done, and how, would be to renounce our responsibilities and the principles and values expressed in the Charter of our Organization. Another Rwanda or Srebrenica would disgrace us all.

Undoubtedly, we must look elsewhere for the true source of the problem. It is surprising that even today countries that claim to embrace human rights are delaying and using pretexts to block prosecution of the authors of the genocide. There are even some who — afraid to accept or think about what happened — refer to this genocide as what happened in Rwanda in 1994, being afraid even to think about it. To take just one example, I refer to the observations of Minister Yerodia Ndombasi on 16 September.

In sum, my delegation calls on the international community to draw every possible lesson from the genocide committed in our country, so that "Never again such a human tragedy" ceases to be an empty phrase. Much more urgent is the question of assistance to Rwanda for rebuilding and making good the huge material and moral damage caused by the 1994 genocide. Such assistance was recommended in the reports of the Independent Inquiry set up by the United Nations and of the Organization of African Unity's international panel of eminent persons. All the members of the international community represented here can help Rwanda rebuild and develop. And each time we wish to do more for the Organization and humanity let the Brahimi report serve as a source of inspiration.

I take this opportunity to salute the Security Council discussions of 15 April, when the recommendations of the Carlsson report were considered and the Council was urged to use its influence to ensure that they were effectively followed up by other United Nations institutions and agencies, including the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), from which we are awaiting special assistance as part of the development assistance programme for Rwanda. We venture to hope that the reforms under way at UNDP will lead to the provision of assistance based on a sincere and enthusiastic partnership according to the British model eloquently outlined by Prime Minister Tony Blair during the Millennium Summit. It is a partnership steeped in equality, justice and fraternal solidarity for all. We invite all our partners to embrace this initiative, in their relations not only with Rwanda, but with all the other developing countries — especially the former colonies.

The reports that I have mentioned also justly call on the international community — beyond contributing to the task of overcoming the devastating effects of genocide — to contribute vigorously to preventing this crime against humanity, in particular by suppressing it. Those who hide, protect and advocate for the criminals responsible for the 1994 genocide should think twice before persisting in this evil behaviour.

I now come to the Congolese crisis, certain aspects of which can be seen as an extension of the genocide committed in Rwanda in 1994. It is worth recalling that after their defeat and withdrawal many militia members and former Rwandan soldiers who were authors of the genocide took refuge in what is now the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Not only were these former soldiers and militia members not disarmed at the time, but they have benefited from new military equipment and training, allowing them to commit acts of genocide along the borders and prepare for a repetition of the previous widespread genocide campaign. Is this not sufficient reason to ask a responsible Government to act to preserve the sovereignty of its country and the security of its people? The Assembly can well understand that this is hardly a case of a security pretext, but, rather, of a current reality.

The plan for a massive invasion by the genocidal forces was thwarted in November 1996 — thank God — by the forces of the Rwandan Patriotic Army. But from May 1997 to August 1998 it was necessary to once again repel infiltrations from the Congo and to resist other acts of genocide committed in the north-western part of our country. The horrors of this rebellion have been the source of a number of resolutions, but the world seems to have rapidly forgotten them.

It is in this context that our country now has a military presence in the Congo — a presence whose only purpose is to prevent a recurrence of genocide in

Rwanda by the same Interahamwe militia and soldiers of the previous regime. We have more or less succeeded in achieving our objectives. Since 1998 we have captured many soldiers of the previous regime and Interahamwe militia, contrary to what Minister Yerodia Ndombasi told the Assembly on 16 September. Most of these soldiers — there are many of them — have rejoined the army. We are continuing to hold 135 of them while they await a decision.

We have also succeeded in saving some of the Interahamwe and the soldiers of the former regimes, as well as innocent civilians who had been held hostage during all this time for purely military and political purposes. In the category of liberated hostages, 12,000 were repatriated since August 1998, and the process continues. We have established centres to receive them on our borders with the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and several humanitarian organizations, including the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), have also been involved. This is a secret to no one, and it has been documented by the UNHCR at Goma and Gisenyi. Those who are against our successes say that these people are Congolese citizens that we have forced into exile in Rwanda, because their departure has created a vacuum in the operations of the allies of these forces of genocide. They are our citizens, and no one can claim to love them as much as we do. They are at home, awaiting the others with open arms.

My Government welcomed the signing of the Lusaka agreements in July 1999 and still upholds them. Their main principles are, first, that the inter-Congolese political negotiations should lead to a new political order in the Democratic Republic of the Congo; and, secondly, that the armed groups should be pursued and disarmed, including former Rwanda military and the Interahamwe authors of the 1994 genocide, who are still attempting to continue their misdeeds, encouraged by certain of our Congolese brothers who go so far as to deny their presence on Congolese territory with the sole purpose of vilifying us, to judge by the statement by Minister Yerodia Ndombasi last Saturday.

The Rwanda delegation deplores the Kinshasa Government's recently calling into question these same agreements, despite the fact that they are upheld by all the countries concerned of the subregion, the Organization of African Unity and the Security Council. Just before that, the Congolese Government had created controversy by refusing to authorize the free movement of United Nations military observers; and that free movement would not be possible outside those agreements, to which that country is a party.

As far as Rwanda is concerned, we believe that, at this time, the Lusaka agreements constitute the only framework that will guarantee a lasting peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in the subregion. Any other approach in this matter would run the risk of dangerously jeopardizing the peace process now under way.

Furthermore, the slowness and hesitations observed in our Organization regarding the deployment of the forces of the United Nations Mission in the Congo must be reviewed, and advantage must be taken of the current offers to strengthen the presence of the United Nations in the zones evacuated by the signatory parties of the Lusaka agreements. Any attempt to reduce the force would only lead to the kind of catastrophe from which the Brahimi report tries to spare us.

I should like to take this opportunity to commend the growing role of regional and subregional organizations in resolving conflicts. As is well known, such a positive involvement has already led to considerable results in various parts of the world, including in South-East Asia and Western Africa. It is our hope that the United Nations will adopt a similar approach to regional contributions to its machinery for conflict resolution.

If the question of conflicts in the world continues to be one of the major preoccupations of our Organization, it would no doubt be a good idea to pay special attention to their prevention. This requires being attentive to the efforts made to eradicate, or at least attenuate, the root causes of conflicts, both domestic and external.

With respect to Rwanda, the halting of the 1994 genocide was followed by courageous policies inspired by the tragic lessons of our recent history. These policies were translated into the following actions for and factors of national reconciliation, as follows:

In July 1994, a Government of National Unity and a Parliament were established including all the components of the Rwanda population and all the political circles of the country. This was an integrative approach such as had never before been known in

independent Rwanda, despite the linguistic, socio-cultural and historical advantages that militate in its favour.

The policy of exclusion, which lasted more than 30 years in all sectors of national life, from education to employment, was eliminated. We are pleased to have abolished, 60 years after its introduction, the identification card, which categorized people according to their ethnic origin and their place of origin and on the basis of which decisions were taken to kill people or to spare their lives.

A skilled, professional national army was established, including the forces of the Rwandan Patriotic Army, which liberated the country, as well as a portion of the forces of the former regime that had separated themselves from the perpetrators of genocide. We welcome their bravery and their discipline. The United Nations needs troops of this type for difficult operations in Sierra Leone and elsewhere.

In March 1999 the National Commission on Human Rights and the Commission for Unity and National Reconciliation were established.

The judicial system was rehabilitated, which guarantees the independence of the magistrature. This judicial system has been strengthened by a form of justice called *gachacha*, which, while keeping to international judicial norms, will benefit from major inputs of the population at the early stages of a trial. This will have the advantage of accelerating the prosecution of those accused of genocide.

In two and a half years more than 3 million refugees have been repatriated. This is all the more striking since Rwanda's refugee problem, having lasted for more than 30 years, is the most numerous and longest-standing in Africa. At present the only ones remaining outside the country are families of criminals responsible for genocide and some refugees whom Rwanda wants to repatriate, but who are still being manipulated by those criminals. Our head of State asked them to return in his inaugural statement at the Supreme Court, and some of them have begun to come back voluntarily to the country.

Democratic elections were held last year. Following the upcoming local elections, they will be completed in October. These are orientations that today guide the policy of unity and national reconciliation, the need for which became clear after the genocide of 1994.

Beyond the eradication of genocide, there are many challenges that deserve the attention of the international community at the beginning of the new millennium. These relate to the gaps between developing countries and prosperous countries in the context of globalization, the reform of the United Nations system and many other current problems, such as the spread of AIDS.

With respect to the gap between developing countries and prosperous countries, the nineteenth and twentieth centuries saw gaps between industrialized countries and poor countries grow even wider. This resulted from technology as well as from political and commercial inequalities left over from the colonial era. After independence many development proposals were made, such as the provision of 0.7 per cent of gross national product for development assistance, technology transfers, a new international economic order favouring fair remuneration for commodities, and so on.

All these strategies have been the subject of a number of international conferences. None of them has been implemented sustainably or consistently. Some of them have remained theoretical and have not even begun to be implemented as programmes. But it is never too late.

For some time now, we have been in an age of globalization of economies in the context of structural gaps that have not changed much since the sixties. My delegation would like to emphasize the urgent need for the preliminary adoption of certain measures to facilitate the establishment of machinery for efficient globalization. Is there any need to recall that the external debt of developing countries constitutes, in and of itself, a real handicap to their economic recovery? How can one talk about growth in a context where external debt absorbs 60 per cent or more of the export income of these same developing countries? What will be the result of globalization in an environment where the competition of market economies reduces in advance the role of certain parts of the world to that of eternal consumers, with the monopoly on production elsewhere? These are all questions that deserve urgent answers and solidarity on the part of the international community.

My delegation believes more particularly that the success of globalization requires courageous accompanying measures, such as eliminating the debt for poor countries and providing support for economic integration policies, in particular in Africa. This requires our world Organization to endow itself with machinery that can help to guide globalization.

For some time now, the United Nations has rightly been concerning itself, at the highest level, with the reform of the functioning of its structures. This is an urgent matter, as it affects what is at stake for the future and even the survival of all of humankind, which can no longer be managed in the same spirit and with the same structures as 55 years ago. We should remember that the number of Member States has increased from 51 in 1954 to 189 today; that is an irrefutable argument for democratization. In this same context, Africa, which has 10 times as many Member States in the United Nations as it did when the Organization was founded, must occupy the place it deserves in the major decision-making bodies of the United Nations, such as the Security Council and others. The Bretton Woods institutions must also change their character and behaviour if globalization and equity are to be real and consistent.

In conclusion, I would like to speak about that other challenge for our times: the AIDS pandemic. This disease is currently responsible for the loss of more human lives that the most deadly wars. The people of the poorest countries are the most vulnerable in the face of this disease of the century. The delegation of Rwanda would like, from this rostrum, to make an urgent appeal to the international community to show solidarity in the face of the threat of extinction of the human race that AIDS represents. Put simply, taking AIDS lightly trivializes the crime of genocide. Both are exterminating people and should be combated with vigour and determination.

More specifically, aid should be provided for humanitarian — if for no other — reasons, so that the least developed countries can benefit from the most up-to-date medicines, at affordable prices, that can provide relief from people suffering from AIDS and do all that they can to contain this scourge.

Furthermore, my delegation is convinced that an effort to mobilize the greatest possible financial resources would enable scientific research to take place to bring this disease, and others, such as malaria, which are devastating a large part of the population, under control.

We hope that the twenty-first century, which is just beginning, will usher in a world of peace and solidarity that will meet the greatest aspirations of humanity.

The Acting President: The next speaker is His Excellency Mr. Patrick Albert Lewis, Chairman of the delegation of Antigua and Barbuda.

Mr. Lewis (Antigua and Barbuda): Let me first of all congratulate Mr. Holkeri on his unanimous election to the mantle of the leadership of the world's foremost international body. He is presiding in this, the last year of the present century, following the profound commitments manifested at the Millennium Summit. We look forward in eager anticipation to the implementation of the Summit pledges, as small States are becoming more and more disillusioned with the actual manifestations and the selectivity of the United Nations.

I should like to offer congratulations to his predecessor, who, as we know, comes from a recently independent country — a country which had to struggle in order to be entrusted with the management of its own affairs. In him, we saw a genuine attempt to move towards some equilibrium in this body. As such, my country applauds his efforts, but we are still awaiting the day when small countries will receive the respect due to sovereign States.

This year we will be making a deliberately short statement, in the hope that the Assembly will concentrate on the myriad of problems with which we are plagued.

Small States do not equate with small problems. In reality, the reverse is often the norm, particularly when the State in question is still on the periphery — the periphery of the dominant industrial entities. In the case of my country, peripheral existence emerged in the post-Colombian era when, along with other Caribbean countries, we became colonies of exploitation, as opposed to colonies of settlement. Mercantilism demanded our production of agricultural commodities, whether indigo, cotton or sugar cane; it was a monoculture, designed solely and purposely for the betterment of the mother country, at the expense of the colonies.

But no doubt the question is being asked as to why I am raising that issue here. It is precisely because the lingering reality is that we are sometimes moved to ask ourselves if we are still victims of the "Robinson Crusoe" mentality. To be a colony of exploitation meant that the entity was an area of underdevelopment — an underdevelopment which meant that we were to remain in that state in perpetuity if we were to fulfil the precise conditions for exploitation.

Throughout history, smaller entities have been, as it were, invisible. We do not have small problems. How could that be the case when nuclear waste is still being trans-shipped through our waters, despite numerous and repeated protests, pleas and entreaties? We have a problem with the World Trade Organization (WTO), which rules in favour of the interests of multinational enterprises and the countries benefiting from the operations of those enterprises. The Windward Island producers of bananas were at a total disadvantage, as they could not afford to pay the cost of adequate representation before the WTO. In 1896, the silver-throated orator, William Jennings Bryan, stood up in California and asked whether mankind should be crucified upon a cross of gold. Today, we must ask if Windward Island humanity is to be snuffed out on a bed of yellow fruit, thereby sending a ripple effect throughout the Caribbean, culminating in deprivation, degradation, depression and the severest forms of dehumanization.

At the Millennium Summit round table, much time was spent talking about globalization, without the fundamental reality of that globalization — so-called free trade — being dealt with. In modern history, there has never been free trade. It has been advocated, encouraged and even preached about. John Bright and Richard Cobden have been acclaimed for their "gospel of free trade", but it has never been a reality. In the nineteenth century, it was propelled by the industrial and maritime countries which stood to benefit from it. In the twentieth century, it has emanated from the dominant States, and the statistics demonstrate that it has wrought havoc on most of the developing world.

This has primarily been the result of selfishness and the unwillingness to listen to and accept the concerns of those who suffer most from it. Yes, we benefit from the expanded use of the Internet, the greater access to education and the ability to travel abroad more frequently. But we have been hurt by extraordinary pressures to control our economic advancement, whether by the influence of multinational enterprises or by maritime activity, which deplete our resources and pollute our environment. Instead of our nutritional level improving, the statistics again show that poverty has spread, and the sick in poor countries cannot access the medicines needed to improve the health of their societies. If we are to have globalization, let us recognize its imperfections and address them meaningfully. Let us not preach, "do as I say but not as I do".

Globalization does not have a human face. We continue to hear about the opportunities for the developing countries, but we are still waiting for the benefits to be made manifest. While we wait, we would like to remind this body that we remain disappointed that the International Criminal Court will not be dealing with illegal trafficking in narcotics or with illegal trade in arms and terrorism. Let us be heard. Let us be seen. We do not have small problems.

At the Millennium Summit, my Prime Minister, Lester Bryant Bird, clearly demonstrated how the world's economic and political agenda is devised and directed by a few of its most powerful Governments. He stated that Antigua and Barbuda, as well as several other small countries,

> "have experienced the most blatant disregard for the rules of international law, rules that have been spelled out by the General Assembly and upheld by the International Court of Justice." (*A/55/PV.3*)

The principle now is "might is right". The Prime Minister pointed out that all of this is being done by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), which believes that its States will lose capital to other States because of their more competitive tax regimes. They have gone further by dubbing tax incentives "harmful tax competition" and linking it most unfairly with money-laundering activities, even when there is no evidence for the charge. My country has voluntarily agreed to contribute more for peacekeeping even with our strapped finances, as we accept our role as a contributor to the welfare of the globe. We would likewise hope that the dominant be fair to us.

I can go on and on with our difficulties and our victimization primarily due to our pusillanimous nature. For the first time in several years we have not elaborated on natural disasters. By now all members of

the United Nations should know of our plight. We would however wish to speak on a decolonization issue.

Antigua and Barbuda has followed closely the question of Western Sahara, and even though we do not have an international intelligence system, we are calling for an implementation of the referendum, as the signals for renewed violence, if the United Nations does not carry out its pledge, are quite clear. We do not wish to see, once again, the carnage witnessed in East Timor.

The conflict, as it has been underlined through resolutions of the United Nations, the Organization of African Unity, and the Movement of Non-Aligned States, must be resolved through the exercise of the Saharawi people of their right to self-determination. The international community has for decades adopted this legal framework as a basis for a just and durable solution to the conflict. We believe that the referendum can be organized before next year, and we are calling for such. We do not wish another situation with the outbreak of violence.

Let me sum up with a few things that Antigua and Barbuda would like to see at the United Nations. We would like to press for the end of "selective" multilateralism and move towards the incorporation of "genuine" multilateralism. We desire to have a reform process expanded beyond the Secretariat and practised among all countries of the Organization. Reform should not connote expansion, it should mean restructuring. The principle of rotation on the major decision-making bodies, particularly the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), should become a reality. And may I repeat: the principle of rotation should become a reality. The concept of globalization should be viewed in its entirety, and a study should be done on its effects on developing countries. The gross national product should not be used as the sole criterion for graduating a State from concessionary loans, and the vulnerability index, on which Antigua and Barbuda is ranked very high, should be taken into consideration. The principle of "the equality of sovereign States" should be used to guard against the marginalization of States within the United Nations system. The countries that have pledged to contribute 0.7 per cent of their official development assistance (ODA) should carry out their commitment in this regard. There should be some form of equity in regard to geographic groupings within the United Nations. While we understand the reasons why the existing groups were created, the time has come for a more equitable arrangement. The nations comprising the United Nations should become truly united.

Antigua and Barbuda will continue to fulfil its obligations to its citizens and to this body. We recognize the benefits that we accrue from our involvement in this parliament of parliaments. We have benefited and will continue to benefit from the programmes of the various bodies and agencies of this body. We are, however, confident that we have contributed towards global progress, and we remain ready to continue our contribution to the United Nations.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Hassan Kibelloh, Chairman of the delegation of the United Republic of Tanzania.

Mr. Kibelloh (United Republic of Tanzania): At the outset, I should like to congratulate the President on his well-deserved election to the presidency of this Millennium Assembly. I also want to congratulate his predecessor for his invaluable contribution and his outstanding leadership during the fifty-fourth General Assembly. In the same vein, I should like to register my delegation's appreciation to the Secretary-General for the excellent manner in which he is conducting the affairs of the Organization. Let me also take this opportunity to express our delight in welcoming the Republic of Tuvalu as the newest member of the United Nations family.

Tanzania is gratified that the recently ended Millennium Summit addressed some of the most pertinent issues and challenges facing the United Nations and its Members in the new millennium. Those issues include development and poverty eradication, the effects of globalization, including technological disparities; conflict prevention, management and resolution; disarmament; and the HIV/AIDS pandemic, malaria and tuberculosis. It was recognized that Africa and, particularly, the least developed countries suffer most and hence demand urgent remedial action by the international community.

Poverty remains one of the areas of great concern in Africa. The number of poor people in our region living on less than one dollar a day is estimated to be 300 million. That number represents more than 40 per cent of Africa's total population. Indications are that the number of poor people in the continent is

likely to increase as Africa's output continues to drop. There is therefore an urgent need for a comprehensive strategy for Africa to address poverty eradication with all its ramifications. The strategy should include a compendium of measures aimed at capacity-building in the development process, including social services. The implementation of such a far-reaching strategy for poverty eradication would very much depend on the availability of resources. Bearing in mind that in 2001 the United Nations will convene a High-level Intergovernmental Event on Financing for Development, it is our hope that the issue of mobilizing resources for the development of Africa will be thoroughly addressed.

Official development assistance continues to be particularly critical in supporting development efforts in Africa and the least developed countries. It is sad to note that flows of official development assistance have fallen to an all-time low of 0.2 per cent, far from the agreed target of 0.7 per cent of the gross national product of developed countries. My delegation therefore wishes to appeal to our development partners to reverse the trend of declining resources and increase the level of official development assistance contributions.

Many African countries are undertaking painful reforms aimed at attracting foreign direct investment. However, foreign direct investment flows have been minimal. Investors should feel encouraged to invest in Africa because the competitive rate of return on foreign direct investment stands at between 24 per cent and 30 per cent. That rate is higher than those of all developed countries, which stand at between 16 per cent and 18 per cent. We therefore call on Governments and relevant international organizations to assist in sensitizing potential international investors to the possibility of directing their investments to Africa.

The various debt relief initiatives pursued by the international community have been helpful, but not sufficient, in providing a meaningful solution to the debt problem of the developing countries. In some of those countries, external debt service constitutes a major drain on scarce resources, taking at least 30 per cent of the national income. In that regard, we welcome the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Debt Initiative to support some of the poor countries in their efforts to resolve the external debt problem. My Government appreciates being one of the countries which have attained eligibility under this scheme. We call upon the institutions concerned to speed up the process towards our reaching the completion point so that we can fully benefit from HIPC relief.

Commenting on the HIPC Initiative, my President, Mr. Benjamin William Mkapa, has had this to say:

> "Tanzania welcomes the revisions made to the HIPC Initiative. If implemented in full they will provide additional debt relief, which in turn will facilitate the war on poverty and will contribute to sustainable growth and development if managed well. However, if growth is to be sustained, adequate levels of external funding must complement our economic reform efforts. Debt relief under the HIPC Initiative should also not be a substitute for increased bilateral non-debt-creating aid, and neither should it be financed through reallocation of committed aid."

Even acknowledging the importance of the HIPC initiative, the burden of meeting debt service payments would remain heavy even after debt relief for most of the least developed countries. We therefore call upon the donor community to increase HIPC debt relief and to consider additional relief measures, including debt cancellation, so that scarce resources will be released to cater for economic development and poverty eradication programmes.

The development of the least developed countries depends on improvement of their capacity to produce goods and services. Improvement of terms of trade and market access for the goods of least developed countries in the developed countries' markets would further contribute towards poverty eradication efforts. In that regard, we call upon developed countries to provide unhindered market access for goods from developing countries, particularly from least developed countries. In the same context, my delegation calls for speedy implementation of the World Trade Organization's Integrated Framework for Trade-related Technical Assistance which will facilitate the integration of least developed countries into the world trading system.

The development process of developing countries very much depends on access to technology and on the endogenous capacity to develop it. We are encouraged that the Millennium Summit reiterated the need to assist developing countries to leapfrog into new

technologies in order to close the existing technology gap between developed and developing countries, especially least developed countries. It is our sincere hope that the Millennium Declaration will be translated into a concrete programme of action to assist developing countries to develop the critical technologies, including information technologies, needed for their development. We therefore call upon our development partners and all relevant international institutions to facilitate the transfer of technology, including environmentally sound technologies, on favourable terms.

My delegation believes that South-South cooperation is an important means of realizing some of the objectives of economic development. Tanzania fully supports the programme of action adopted last April in Havana, Cuba, at the South Summit.

Tanzania recognizes and fully supports the role of women in the development process. Here, the Government has adopted a number of specific measures aimed at enhancing the participation of women in decision-making processes, and at bringing about equal access to education and health, and access to credit on a preferential basis. In the area of representation, for example, the Government has increased the minimum quota of women parliamentarians from 15 per cent to 20 per cent. The Government has also passed legislation that criminalizes discriminatory activities against women. Furthermore, the Land Act was revised in 1999 to enable women to own land, the major means of production in Tanzania. Tanzania is firmly committed, therefore, to implementing the Beijing Platform for Action. We therefore call on the international community to support our efforts in this regard.

Serious pandemics such as HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis are threatening the economic and social development of developing countries, especially African and least developed countries. For example, the scale of the HIV/AIDS pandemic has grown to alarming proportions in Africa. The Security Council has recognized this menace as constituting a security threat. Moreover, the Millennium Summit has underscored the urgency of adopting effective action to combat the scourge. Tanzania urges the international community to assist developing countries in this endeavour, particularly in education and access to affordable treatment.

Disarmament, peace and security continue to be crucial to the aspirations of all humanity, and therefore they constitute a critical challenge of the new millennium. The existence of huge arsenals of nuclear weapons poses a major potential threat to world peace and security. These weapons continue to represent a threat to the survival of mankind. Tanzania calls for the complete destruction and elimination of all nuclear weapons. The United Nations also needs to urgently address the problem of small arms and light weapons, which fuel most of the ongoing conflicts in various regions of the world. In this context, we strongly support the convening of the 2001 United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

The Millennium Summit addressed extensively the conflict situations existing in some countries, including those of Africa. The Summit reaffirmed the existence of the intrinsic link between peace and development, which requires an integrated approach to conflict prevention, management and resolution. While supporting United Nations peace efforts, we note with concern that there has been a slow and an inadequate response to African conflicts from the United Nations.

In Angola, it is with apprehension that we bear witness to the continuing hostilities and the grave humanitarian situation brought about by Jonas Savimbi and his organization, UNITA; they have blatantly violated the decisions of the Security Council regarding the implementation of the Lusaka Protocol. It is disturbing that Mr. Savimbi has been able to sustain his insurgency by violating the sanctions imposed against UNITA by the Security Council. We call upon the international community to continue its support to the Government of Angola.

On Burundi, my delegation is pleased to note that after protracted negotiations between the parties involved in the Burundi conflict, the Burundi peace and reconciliation agreement was concluded in Arusha, Tanzania on 28 August 2000. We welcome the agreement and commend the Facilitator, President Nelson Mandela, for his role in reconciling the parties. We also commend the regional leaders for their efforts in support of the Burundi peace process. Although a small number of parties to the conflict did not sign the agreement, efforts were made to ensure that all of them would sign it. As I speak here, most of the parties have now signed. It is our hope that the parties will abide by the terms of the agreement and afford the people of

Burundi the opportunity to realize their aspirations for peace and development. We call upon the United Nations and the international community to extend support to the agreement.

As for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Lusaka Agreement remains the basis for the resolution of the conflict in that country. It is unfortunate, though, that there is an impasse in the implementation of the Agreement. One of the reasons for the existing situation is the mistrust among the parties. The delay in the deployment of the United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has created a vacuum that has further contributed to the impasse. Tanzania supports Security Council resolution 1234 (1999). We also urge the Security Council to deploy the peacekeeping force in the Democratic Republic of the Congo as soon as possible.

On Somalia, we welcome the agreement reached in Djibouti on the formation of the Government of that country. In this regard, we congratulate the Government of Djibouti for its constructive role in the reconciliation process.

Concerning Western Sahara, Tanzania reiterates its support for the right to self-determination of the Sahrawi people and the effort of the United Nations to organize and supervise an impartial, free and fair referendum, in accordance with the Settlement Plan for Western Sahara and the relevant Security Council and other United Nations resolutions. We urge the United Nations to conduct, as soon as possible, the referendum on the basis of the preparations that have so far been made. The lessons of East Timor should not be ignored.

On the Middle East, Tanzania continues to support the cause of the Palestinian people. In this regard, we welcome the ongoing peace process aimed at achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in that volatile region.

There is a direct linkage between conflicts and the incidence of refugees and internally displaced persons. In this respect, Tanzania finds itself in the very difficult situation of hosting more than 800,000 refugees, most of whom are products of the crisis in the Great Lakes region. This is a huge burden for a poor country like Tanzania. Besides, refugees pose many problems relating to security and environmental degradation. There is an urgent need for the international community to increase its support to the refugees, as well as to the refugee-hosting countries. In the same vein, we reiterate our call for international burden-sharing and responsibility in refugee situations. A definitive solution to the refugee situation evidently lies in resolving conflicts so as to enable the repatriation of refugees to their countries of origin.

One of the pressing reform issues in the United Nations is the reform of the Security Council. Among the significant changes of our time is the liberalization and democratization of economic and political processes. The Security Council cannot persist in being an exception. Its composition and powers must bear a relationship to the democratic ideals necessary for its continued relevance and legitimacy. It is our hope that the Council membership will be expanded in both categories and that such expansion should include both developed and developing countries.

Furthermore, Tanzania believes that the capacity of the United Nations to effectively carry out its mandate is contingent upon the willingness of all Member States to support it politically as well as financially. In this regard, we call upon the Member States to provide it with adequate resources on a timely and predictable basis.

Tanzania also welcomes the many reform proposals and measures that have been introduced to improve working methods, both at the Secretariat and at intergovernmental levels. For that effort to succeed, there has to be consensus among Member States on the best method to manage change in the United Nations.

In conclusion, allow me to observe that the Millennium Assembly, like the preceding Summit, is an act of partnership. We can only hope, therefore, that the renewed enthusiasm and the recommitment to the Charter of the United Nations will galvanize our energies and enable us to rise to and fulfil, the hopes and aspirations of the Organization and its peoples, as espoused in the Millennium Declaration.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Ignacio Arcaya, Chairman of the delegation of Venezuela.

Mr. Arcaya (Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): I again extend our congratulations to the President on his election.

The Millennium Summit has charted for us a plan of action for the immediate future. We must consistently bear that plan of action in mind as our main priority, and direct all our work towards its

effective implementation. We cannot view the final document adopted by the most important gathering of world leaders ever held as a mere expression of good intentions and act as though it were a matter of routine and as if nothing had happened.

First, we must take action to ensure that the vast majority of the human race living in developing countries make significant progress towards the attainment of sustainable development. We must make special efforts with respect to the millions of men, women and children who live in poverty. They must be given means of subsistence, education and medical care.

Our most important shared instrument, the United Nations, is currently ill-equipped for that enormous task. We must therefore focus on giving it the power and means to play an effective role in that important effort. We believe that the United Nations must play a central role in the struggle for development. To that end, we must consider without delay ways to strengthen the General Assembly, our most democratic and open institution. It is equally necessary to strengthen the Organization's primary instrument in this field, the Economic and Social Council, which should become a real council for human development, with authority and ability to act comparable to the Security Council's.

The message of the Millennium Summit is very clear: peace and development are equally important, and each depends on the other. The most urgent tasks in the struggle against poverty are also clear: to alleviate the debt burden of highly indebted poor countries; to tackle the scourges of AIDS and malaria; and to provide education for all. In all of those tasks the United Nations must play a leadership role.

In order to meet the established goals of reducing world poverty by half by 2015, we must ensure that national Government's measures adopted in accordance with the social platform of United Nations conferences, to benefit their populations in the areas of health, food and education, are accompanied by international cooperation based on solidarity, in order that those tasks are carried out efficiently and promptly.

It is therefore particularly important, in order to support the objectives of, and strategies for, poverty eradication, that developed countries meet their commitment to dedicate 0.7 per cent of gross domestic product to official development assistance.

It is equally urgent to ensure that the rules regulating international trade and finance are just and equitable, not only in theory but also in practice, so that they lead to development for all, and not merely to the further enrichment of a privileged minority.

In that regard, the high-level intergovernmental meeting on financing for development, to be held next year, should result in effective coordination and harmonization of all the efforts Governments and international organizations, so that those efforts may bear tangible fruits meeting the needs of all countries. The United Nations must be the coordinating centre for the World Trade Organization and the Bretton Woods institutions.

With regard to foreign debt, it is vital that the international community promote, on the basis of North-South dialogue, the adoption of concerted measures for the effective resolution of this problem, which is seriously weakening the sustained economic growth of developing countries affected by the excessive burden of debt servicing. We believe that it will be necessary to consider the timely rescheduling on favourable terms of the international financial commitments of developing countries, including highly indebted poor countries and medium-income countries.

The freeing of resources currently allocated to debt payment will make it possible for those countries more efficiently to meet the real needs of their populations in the areas of food, health and education. It will also promote their peoples' participation and full integration within their respective societies. It is also necessary to recognize the economic and social costs incurred by developing countries in meeting foreign debt payments.

Shared responsibility in dealing with economic and social issues, as well as with regard to questions of peace, requires more intensive and effective participation by developing countries in the world economy, particularly in decision-making and the formulation of international and economic norms.

The efforts of the developing countries towards poverty eradication, economic and social progress, sustained economic growth and sustainable development are dependent on a favourable international economic environment and on international cooperation for renewed and strengthened development. The magnitude and urgency of the challenges facing us in the economic and social sphere

require the support of all Member States in order to realize the aspirations of those who cry out for a more equitable and just world, in which poverty eradication and the promotion of development are a genuine expression of international peace and stability.

As for our other main priority, the maintenance of peace, we must learn from our experience — both from our mistakes and from our achievements.

The United Nations must be provided with the means to anticipate and prevent conflicts, not just put an end to them once they have erupted.

In this respect, disarmament, including nuclear disarmament, is vital, as is the elimination of the illicit arms trade. Also key is the struggle against transnational criminal activities such as terrorism and the illicit drug trade.

In this context, we welcome the proposal of the Secretary-General to convene an international conference on the reduction of the nuclear threat. We believe that this could help strengthen the commitment to eliminate nuclear weapons, as recently agreed at the sixth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

Venezuela supports the convening of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, to be held next year. That Conference will be a perfect opportunity for us to combine our efforts to adopt measures of cooperation to eliminate this illicit activity, which has links to organized transnational crime and is encouraged by unscrupulous groups or individuals who act unlawfully.

The role of the United Nations as the only forum empowered to authorize the use of force must be reaffirmed, without distinctions or exceptions, apart from self-defence, which in turn must be in strict compliance with the provisions of the Charter.

It is urgent to this end to make effective progress towards reform of the Security Council. This does not mean mere cosmetic change, but rather real reform, with a view to ensuring its credibility as a democratic, transparent and impartial organ in which no country has the right to block, through the use of the veto, action agreed by the majority.

If we wish the Millennium Summit to have real significance, if we want it to be remembered not only because of the milestone represented by the participation of an unprecedented number of world leaders, we must take concrete action at this session of the General Assembly. Towards that end, Venezuela fully supports the proposal made recently by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Uruguay to create a working group to ensure implementation of the Millennium Summit Declaration. We believe that this group should be open to participation by all Member States. We believe also that the representatives of the countries that co-chaired the Summit and those that presided over the four round tables, as well as the Chairmen of the regional groups, should participate actively in this process.

The Acting President: I give the floor to His Excellency The Honourable Anil Kumarsingh Gayan, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Regional Cooperation of Mauritius.

Mr. Gayan (Mauritius): It gives me great pleasure to address the Assembly under the leadership of Mr. Harri Holkeri. I offer him our heartiest congratulations on his election to preside over this first session of the new millennium and assure him of the total support and cooperation of my delegation.

We would like also to thank Mr. Theo-Ben Gurirab, the Foreign Minister of Namibia, for the excellent manner in which he presided over the work of the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly. This year again, we wish to compliment the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for his remarkable leadership in the conduct of the work of the United Nations. We pay special tribute also to the President of the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly and to the Secretary-General for their imaginative and tireless efforts in achieving the resounding success of the Millennium Summit, held here just a few weeks ago. We also wish to welcome Tuvalu as the newest Member of the United Nations family.

During that historic Summit — the largest gathering of heads of State or Government the world has ever seen — the relevance and importance of the United Nations in a global society was emphasized. World leaders pledged most prominently their commitment to ensuring that the United Nations adapts to the new era and strengthens its capacity to deal with the challenges of maintaining peace and security, eliminating poverty and promoting development and progress for the benefit of all humanity.

Since its inception, the United Nations has been a beacon of hope to mankind for a more secure and prosperous world. The recently adopted Millennium Declaration provides fresh impetus to the United Nations to rededicate itself to the fulfilment of the lofty ideals of our Organization, namely to uphold world peace and security and promote cooperation and development in all areas of human endeavour.

The maintenance of world peace and security remains the biggest challenge for our Organization. The continued existence of nuclear arsenals and the threat of a nuclear disaster represent a major impediment to the maintenance of peace and security. Following the end of the cold war, the feeling of insecurity created by nuclear militarization has diminished, but the international community's aspiration to global disarmament and the complete elimination of weapons of mass destruction within a defined time-frame has eluded us.

We welcome all the efforts the international community is making towards achieving universal acceptance of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Yet more than 30,000 nuclear weapons are deployed around the world, including weapons that are still maintained in a high state of readiness. The risk that nuclear weapons may explode, whether by design or by accident, is ever growing. My delegation is convinced that the early convening of an international conference on nuclear disarmament to address issues of global denuclearization, including the total elimination of all existing nuclear weapons within a specific time-frame, is of critical importance. Such a conference would allow all States, most importantly those possessing nuclear capabilities and which do not fall under the purview of the NPT and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), to voice their concerns and contribute substantially towards achieving a world free of nuclear weapons. This is a debt we owe to generations yet unborn.

The role of the Security Council in the crucial area of international peace and security is evident. However, this central organ of our Organization will be rendered even more effective if it is further strengthened to make it respond positively to the emerging new realities which the new millennium is bound to confront.

Members of the United Nations attach great importance to the need for reform of this supreme body. It is to be noted that under the existing provisions of the Charter, which date back from a time when two thirds of the Members of the United Nations were still under colonial rule, a handful of States on the Security Council have the power to make decisions that bind the whole membership. Such a mode of operation is completely out of tune with today's realities, and, for this institution to retain its credibility, it should undergo a comprehensive reform, taking into consideration proper and equitable geographical representation.

In this regard, Mauritius supports the position of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) on the expansion and representativity of the Security Council, and we look forward to an early conclusion of the work of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council.

We support an increase in the membership of the Security Council, and we are in favour of making the Council an effective representative body that can act in the interests of humankind at large at all times.

The meeting of the Security Council at the level of heads of State during the Millennium Summit was an unparalleled opportunity for the 15 Members to discuss, at the highest level, how to make peacekeeping operations more responsive. We are all aware that deployment of United Nations troops in conflict situations is seen as the last chance for the restoration of peace and, in this venture, we simply cannot afford to fail. Therefore, the discussions that took place at the summit level of the Security Council need to be seriously pursued so that the future orientation of peacekeeping operations may be effected on a sounder basis.

In this respect, we welcome the proposals for improving the United Nation peacekeeping performance, as contained in the report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations — the Brahimi Report — and we look forward to their speedy implementation.

It is indeed a sad reflection that at the dawn of a new century, several African nations, such as Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sierra Leone, Burundi, Somalia and the Comoros remain trapped in civil conflicts with disastrous consequences for millions of people on the continent and in the

subregion. At the regional level, the OAU, as well as leaders of the subregions concerned, have spared no efforts to address each of these conflicts, but we need to realize that no great success has been achieved so far. The intransigence of the main protagonists involved continues to remain the stumbling block towards the peaceful resolution of conflicts in Africa.

The involvement of the United Nations in these conflicts has unfortunately also met with little success. We need to be imaginative, and we need to explore, with the civil society in each country in conflict, ways and means to convincingly establish that the fruits of peace are achievable. We need to look at the permanence of our interests, and these are based in peace and stability.

We also note with great concern that, despite all the efforts and steps taken by the OAU for a speedy return to constitutional order in the Comoros, the Anjouanese separatists and the military leadership in Moroni have signed the Fomboni Declaration in defiance of the OAU and the international community. We urge the international community to refrain from lending any support to the Fomboni Joint Declaration which, we believe, will undermine the unity and territorial integrity of the Comoros. Indeed, it is unacceptable that the future of the archipelago of the Comoros be compromised by two individuals who are non-elected and do not represent the aspirations of the population. We reiterate our support to the OAU in its ongoing efforts aimed at resolving the crisis, in accordance with the provisions of the Antananarivo accord, which remains the most viable framework for a lasting, consensual and durable solution to the crisis. We call on the military regime and the separatists in Anjouan to cooperate with the OAU so as to achieve an early resolution of the crisis.

We welcome the signing of the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities between Ethiopia and Eritrea this year. This is a positive step, and we urge the OAU, the United Nations and other States to continue support for these two countries to take the next steps to conclude a settlement for lasting peace. Our region deserves no less.

While, inevitably, the international community, through the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations, must continue to do all it can to end the existing conflicts and prevent new ones, there is an important aspect of civil conflict that cannot be overlooked any longer. It has been established beyond doubt that civil conflicts such as those in Angola and Sierra Leone have resulted from personal ambition or greed for private enrichment on the part of powerful individuals, rather than in pursuit of a legitimate cause and struggle for the common good. In pursuit of their sinister designs, these individuals wage long wars on and against their own people and, acting with impunity, inflict untold suffering on the masses, including women, the elderly and children, cause refugee problems within and outside their national frontiers, and retard development and progress of their countries. We believe that such dangerous persons should not only be condemned and stopped as early as possible from pursuing their unpatriotic designs, but also should be made to answer to their people and to the international community for the crimes they commit.

The proposed International Criminal Court should serve as the tribunal of the international community to try and punish such individuals and, the sooner it starts functioning, the better it will be for humanity at large. The International Criminal Court will not only be a deterrent for people who engage in heinous crimes but will also be an important instrument for the maintenance of international peace and security. Unless such a step is taken, the world will continue to face similar tragedies, and the perpetrators of such tragedies will go unpunished.

At long last, we have seen a glimmer of hope for the suffering people of Somalia. We congratulate the leaders of the Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD) for their initiative in putting together a peace and reconciliation process that will allow for the establishment of a representative government to take charge of the affairs of the country. We appeal to all factions in Somalia to come together and to take part in this new initiative, with a view to stopping the misery that the Somali people have endured for too long.

Important steps have been made this year towards peace in the Middle East. We congratulate President Arafat and Prime Minister Barak for the courage they demonstrated recently during the difficult negotiations in Camp David under the guidance of President Clinton. We believe that, having reached such a crucial stage of the negotiations, President Arafat and Prime Minister Barak must meet the daunting challenge of taking further steps forward to reach a final agreement.

We are confident that both leaders have the capacity to bridge the gaps and reach a mutually acceptable and satisfactory agreement. We appreciate that the issues outstanding in the path of such an agreement are delicate, but we are confident that the leaders of the region will respond to the ardent wish of peoples around the world for a peaceful Middle East.

It may sound like an anachronism, but it has happened just a few months ago in the Pacific region — namely in Fiji and in the Solomon Islands — that small bands of thugs have overturned democratically elected Governments. In the case of Fiji, Prime Minister Mahendra Chaudhry together with his whole Cabinet of Ministers, was held hostage for as long as 56 days, in a struggle for political power. The Prime Minister was set free only after he finally conceded that his Government would resign.

The international community watched helplessly as the tragic situation unfolded in Fiji. The fact that this is not the first time that a democratically elected Government is overthrown by unorthodox and violent means makes the situation all the more serious and calls for the immediate attention of the international community. Mauritius condemns unreservedly all attempts by any group, anywhere, to thwart the will of the people by force. I am reminded here of the statement of the United Nations Secretary-General at the opening of the OAU Summit in Lomé this year when, applauding the OAU decision to exclude Governments that have come to power by unconstitutional means from participating in OAU meetings, he expressed the wish that some day the United Nations also would take a similar decision. The time has come for us to seriously consider such avenues in order to send a clear signal to people who are bent upon perpetrating constitutional violations in total disregard of the will of the people.

Mauritius remains fully committed to the respect and promotion of human rights, democracy, good governance and the rule of law. These principles are enshrined in our Constitution. With regard to human rights, our commitment goes far beyond our national borders, as reflected in our membership in various United Nations committees, where we play an active role. Multi-party, free and fair elections constitute core traditions jealously cherished by the people of Mauritius. In the exercise of our valued democratic rights, on 11 September last, just 10 days ago, the people of Mauritius, for the seventh time since our independence in 1968, elected a new Government. This Government remains committed to supporting strongly, at the national, regional and international levels, the principles I have mentioned earlier.

Since we met in September last, we have witnessed several acts of terrorism in various parts of the world endangering the lives of numerous innocent people. The hijacking of an Indian Airlines jet, the kidnapping of unsuspecting tourists from a Malaysian holiday resort and bomb attacks in some capitals are grim reminders of the dangers we face at the hands of unscrupulous and heartless fanatics. We condemn all acts of terrorism and call on the international community to take concerted action to deal with this problem. For our part, Mauritius stands prepared to play a significant role in the United Nations and its various organs to combat all such acts which pose a threat to international peace and security.

I had some remarks on people-centred development, debt and globalization. I refer delegates to the text that will be circulated. I will now talk about regional cooperation.

Mauritius attaches great priority to global partnership in addressing the key issues of poverty alleviation, achieving sustainable growth and development, and peace and security. We believe that regional cooperation continues to be the inevitable route towards strengthening international partnership and cooperation. Regional cooperation not only is desirable, but constitutes a necessary dimension in the process of the regional integration of many economies into the global economy.

Small island developing States, which constitute one fifth of the membership of the United Nations, are in a particularly difficult situation due to their vulnerability to a wide range of ecological, climatic and economic factors. The specificities of these States have been articulated in the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. Constraints to their sustainable development include a narrow resource base that does not allow them to benefit from economies of scale, and the fact that they have small domestic markets. They also rely heavily on external markets, which are usually geographically distant, and costs for transportation, energy and infrastructure are high. In addition, small island States have little resilience to natural disasters. A vulnerability index of

socio-economic and other parameters has been prescribed for these States in the Barbados Programme of Action. We urge the United Nations and other international organizations to coordinate their efforts in developing and refining such an index, which should be used, together with other factors, by the World Trade Organization and the Bretton Woods institutions to accord special and preferential treatment to this category of State.

I wish to say a few words now about the Chagos archipelago and the island of Tromelin. Respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity is, under the United Nations system, an acquired and inalienable right of every State, however big or small. We are conscious that the United Nations favours the completion of the process of decolonization.

For a number of years now, we have continuously brought before the General Assembly the question of the Chagos archipelago, which has always formed part of the State of Mauritius. This Assembly will recall that the Chagos archipelago, including the island of Diego Garcia, was detached by the colonial Power just before our independence, in violation of General Assembly resolutions 1514 (XV) of December 1960 — the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples — and 2066 (XX) of 16 December 1965, which prohibits the dismemberment of colonial territories prior to the accession to independence. We have all along sought to resolve this issue bilaterally with the United Kingdom through dialogue, but there has been no tangible progress so far. This issue has now reached a critical stage and we are extremely anxious to have meaningful negotiations with the United Kingdom with a view to resolving this matter within the shortest possible time. We also reiterate our demand that, pending a resolution of this issue, the former residents of the Chagos archipelago and their families, who were forcibly evicted and sent to Mauritius by the colonial Power, be allowed to return to their homeland.

We launch a fresh appeal to the former colonial Power, the United Kingdom, to come forward and engage in serious and purposeful discussions with us towards the early settlement of the Chagos archipelago question. We wish to stress that Mauritius will never abandon its intention to reunite its territory and to assert its sovereignty over the Chagos archipelago.

We also urge France, with which we have been discussing the issue of the return to us of the island of Tromelin, another outer island territory of Mauritius, to work with us constructively for an early resolution of this important issue. There is an agreement in principle for the co-determination of the island and its surrounding maritime space and we need to work out further modalities so as to arrive at a final solution on this issue.

(*spoke in French*)

I was gratified by the meeting, on 6 September 2000, of heads of State and Government of French-speaking States Members of the United Nations. That meeting allowed us to consider and arrive at the truth that the United Nations is the keystone that will allow mankind to free itself from the chains and other prejudices that hinder the evolution of international affairs and globalization, the two main engines of a better future for all. This meeting offered French-speaking States Members of the United Nations the opportunity firmly to assert their determination to achieve that objective.

I wish to stress that the future to which we aspire and in which we place our hopes must develop in conditions of respect for and promotion of the plurality of our peoples, their cultural and ethnic diversity and their multilingualism. We are duty-bound to respect, maintain and preserve the nature of our world, that rainbow of many cultures which, through globalization and the United Nations, will be a source of enormous wealth for States and individuals.

The Republic of Mauritius daily lives out this vision of the future. Our experience prompts us to subscribe to that vision for the common good. Hopes and dreams are built on concrete action. With the assistance of all its Member States, the United Nations must enjoy better and greater means. Only thus will peace become a tangible reality. Without peace and security, any effort at development is doomed to failure and the happiness to which the peoples of the world aspire will remain dead letter.

(*spoke in English*)

It goes without saying that, to achieve the objectives of a more peaceful, just and prosperous world, nations need to rededicate themselves to new commitments in the twenty-first century. Our delegation is ready to assume this responsibility and

looks forward to a fruitful outcome for the session that lies ahead under Mr. Holkeri's leadership.

I wish to end on a note of optimism with regard to the capacity of the United Nations to address global issues and to spearhead development and progress. My delegation is confident that our Organization and its specialized agencies are poised to play an even greater role in global reconstruction. We live in a highly demanding world. It wants results, seeks accountability and is not ready to condone failures. We all have a responsibility to make the world a safer place and to ensure a better future for our people. We can do it. Let us do it.

Before I conclude, however, I wish to take this opportunity to confirm the candidature of Mauritius for election to one of the non-permanent seats in the Security Council in the elections that are scheduled to take place next month. As far back as January 2000, Mauritius announced to all countries of the East African region that we would seek election to a non-permanent seat on the Security Council. At that time, Mauritius was the only declared candidate. The Government of Mauritius considers itself fully qualified to serve on the Security Council, which is the supreme organ of the United Nations, in the larger interests of peace and security and to contribute in a substantial measure to the important work of our Organization.

As a multi-party democracy in a multi-ethnic society, Mauritius has a track record in international relations and we consider that the standing of the Security Council depends upon that of its constituent members. The Security Council will be called upon to take important decisions in the interests of peace and security and it is important that the Security Council act as a homogeneous body. It is the wish of my country that our candidature be considered on its merits. We will very much appreciate the General Assembly's support in this regard.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Haile Weldensae, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Eritrea.

Mr. Weldensae (Eritrea): At the outset, I wish to extend my congratulations to Mr. Holkeri on his unanimous election as President of the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session. I am confident that, under his able and wise guidance, this session will successfully accomplish its tasks.

I would also like to express appreciation and thanks to his predecessor, Mr. Theo-Ben Gurirab, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Namibia, for the effectiveness with which he directed the work of the last session.

I also take this opportunity to extend congratulations to the Republic of Tuvalu on becoming the latest Member of the United Nations.

We shall not forget to express our thanks and appreciation to our Secretary-General, not only for his tireless efforts to ensure respect for the values, purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, but also for his far-sighted and thought-provoking millennium report.

The fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly is meeting in the wake of the Millennium Summit, whose Declaration embodies three fundamental messages. First, it reaffirms that the ideals and goals of the United Nations are still sacred to humanity and that the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter are as valid today as they were in the past. Secondly, it reminds us that the lofty principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter require us to continuously strengthen the United Nations and to make the necessary adjustments and changes to enable it to meet the challenges of justice, peace and security, poverty and disease, socio-economic development, the inequities of the global economy and the protection of the environment. Thirdly, respect for the ideals and observance of the purposes and principles of the United Nations remain the essential keys to the creation of a peaceful, prosperous and humane new world order. To this end, the Declaration enjoins us to be loyal to these common ideals, goals, values and principles. It reminds us that each State has a responsibility to act not only by itself, but also within a regional system, to give the loyalty that is due to these values, goals, purposes and principles.

In this connection, I wish to join others before me who have reminded us of the urgent need to reform the United Nations, including in particular the Security Council and the General Assembly, with a view to enabling the Organization to reflect the realities of the times and to empower it to meet effectively and efficiently the challenges of the day and the future.

I wish to reaffirm the commitment of the people and the Government of the State of Eritrea to the noble ideals and values, as well as the purposes and

principles, of the United Nations. Having made supreme sacrifices and paid dearly, during a 30-year struggle for independence and membership in the international community, Eritreans appreciate how essential the United Nations and its Charter are to their well-being and prosperity. Having fully experienced the horrors of a long war and the benefits of a short peace, they recognize the need for the peaceful and just settlement of disputes and for cooperation for mutual benefit in the long human struggle to create an international order based on justice and equality.

To this end, Eritrean foreign policy has been premised on the assumption that the threat or use of force can never be an instrument of foreign policy, and that even in a clear case self-defence it must be used only after all available methods of peacefully resolving disputes have been exhausted — and then only with extreme caution.

It is for this reason — and because Eritrea has suffered from the non-application by the United Nations itself of the principles of its own Charter and the decisions of the General Assembly — that, upon independence, Eritrea decided to make the ideals, values, purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter the cornerstone of its foreign policy. By its membership, it had also hoped to play an active role in promoting the principle of the universality of membership in the United Nations and in promoting the achievement of fair and equitable regional and international orders.

Eritrea is also fully aware of its responsibilities as a littoral State of a strategic international thoroughfare and has committed itself to contributing its share to the stability and security of the region, as well as to the creation of a zone of peace and cooperation in the region. To this end, it has made every effort to foster an atmosphere that will enhance cooperation among the littoral States of both sides of the Red Sea and promote development and mutual prosperity. It has also played a major role in the transformation of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) from a simple natural disaster-control mechanism to a vibrant regional organization which will promote peace and cooperation among its member States, as well as advance economic and social cooperation for development. The recent meeting of the ever-expanding Community of Sahelo-Saharan States, in Asmara, our capital, is a testimony to Eritrea's commitment to the consolidation of the unity of and the broadening and deepening of cooperative relations between African countries. This commitment will for ever be firm.

In spite of its victimization, Eritrea had decided to forget the past and to start with a clean slate as it evolved a vision, and set its priorities, for the future. It established good relations with all its neighbours on the basis of the United Nations and Organization of African Unity Charters and the principle of good-neighbourliness. It assumed that there would not be any territorial disputes with its neighbours, since its colonial borders were clearly defined and recognized and had been accepted at independence by all its neighbours. It had no reason to assume that its independence would be threatened by any State, near or far, any more than it had any reason to assume that it had the right to use force to expand at the expense of its neighbours. Its sole ambition as a new member of the international community was to make up for lost time in development.

In spite of all its commitments and goodwill, however, Eritrea has, during its brief seven years of formal independence, been tested by and had to defend itself against political pressures, threats and actual attempts which endangered not only its sovereignty and territorial integrity, but also its hard-won independence. True, Eritrea may not be the only new country in history that has been so tested. Yet it must be the only Member of the United Nations whose territorial integrity — indeed, its very existence as a sovereign, independent State — has been threatened and is still being threatened at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

It goes without saying that this struggle to preserve its independence has been detrimental to the nation-building and development efforts of the new State. Yet throughout this time, Eritrea has never wavered in its commitment to the peaceful resolution of the disputes. Indeed, it has solved two of its problems peacefully on a bilateral basis and a third through international arbitration.

It was perhaps during the last two years that Eritrea's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity were most severely tested. What was labelled a border dispute proved to be a serious attempt to reverse history and to recolonize Eritrea — or, failing that, to truncate it, to Finlandize it, and to turn it into a satellite State. This attempt was thwarted by the united

effort of Eritreans at home and abroad. However, the attempt exacted its cost: the systematic and wilful destruction of much of the economic and social infrastructure of the country and the deliberate, brutal violation of the human rights of Eritreans, including the terrorizing and brutalizing of the population in the occupied territories.

Eritrea is convinced that there is no alternative to the solution of conflicts by peaceful means and on the basis of the Charters of the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the existing principles of international law.

From the beginning of the conflict, Eritrea has repeatedly declared that war can never be an option to resolve conflicts, that neither of the parties can settle the conflict by imposing its will and creating facts on the ground and then hope to achieve durable and meaningful peace. It is a clear manifestation of its commitment to peace and the rule of law that Eritrea still remains committed to a peaceful resolution of the conflict, notwithstanding the occupation of large tracts of its territory, the displacement of hundreds of thousands of its people, the continued brutalization and terrorization of the people in occupied territory and the feverish war preparations for yet another attempt against its territorial integrity. It has already taken bold measures, shown flexibility and made important concessions, however unpalatable they may have been, in the hope of achieving a just peace and in spite of the attempts that are being made to destroy the OAU peace proposals. Again, Eritrea pledges that it will continue to do its utmost to reach a comprehensive and conclusive agreement peacefully.

Yet, the fate of peace hinges on three critical factors. First, the search for peace is a shared responsibility. It cannot be left to only one of the parties. Secondly, peace can be made certain only when it is anchored on the values, ideals and principles of the Charter, which have been emphatically reconfirmed by the Millennium Declaration. Among these is respect for the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of States. Thirdly, peace can be achieved only with the faithful implementation of agreements accepted by parties to a conflict. We invite all concerned to join Eritrea in extending full cooperation to the OAU Facilitators, in making a genuine and unequivocal commitment to the OAU peace process and in being faithful to the letter and spirit of the provisions of the OAU peace documents, in particular the Framework Agreement and the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement.

At this juncture, I wish to seize this opportunity to renew our appreciation and gratitude to His Excellency President Abdelaziz Bouteflika for his unwavering commitment to the peaceful resolution of the conflict, and to his personal envoy, His Excellency Ahmed Ouyahia, for the wisdom and skill with which he led the indirect talks. We also extend our appreciation to the international community, including the Government of the United States of America and the European Union, as well as other African governments, for their tireless efforts towards the achievement of a peaceful resolution and for the positive contribution they made to ensure the signing of the Agreement on the Cessation of Hostilities in Algiers on 18 June 2000. We request them to persist in their noble endeavour until a genuine and just peace is really achieved.

Finally, the Government of the State of Eritrea notes with great appreciation the effort that has been exerted, and the commitments made, by the United Nations to ensure an early, comprehensive settlement of the conflict. In this connection, I wish to draw the attention of the Security Council to the urgent necessity of deploying the peacekeeping force authorized by its resolution 1320 (2000) as quickly as possible in order to forestall any avoidable obstacles that may threaten, or even destroy, the gains that have been achieved at great cost and much effort by so many.

The Acting President: I now call on the Chairman of the delegation of Benin, Mr. Joël Wassi Adechi.

Mr. Adechi (Benin) (*spoke in French*): It is my pleasure to congratulate the President on his election. It bears witness to the esteem which the international community has for his country and for him. In wishing him every success in the conduct of our work, I should like to assure him also of the sincere cooperation of the delegation of Benin.

May I also pay a well-deserved tribute to his predecessor, Mr. Theo-Ben Gurirab, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Namibia, for the outstanding work he accomplished.

In view of the developments in international relations, the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, had the felicitous initiative of gathering the highest

representatives of the peoples of the world for consultations on a new world order and on the role which the United Nations will be called upon to play.

I would like to pay him a well-deserved tribute and emphasize the determined conviction and competence with which he heads the Organization.

The Millennium Summit showed once again that multilateralism and international cooperation remain the best approach to confront problems in globalization. Indeed, the positive effects of globalization remain limited, as is borne out by imbalances in economic and social terms that characterize the world today and violate human dignity and human rights. What must be done therefore is to channel the globalization process towards economic and social progress for the benefit of the greatest number.

In this process, the United Nations has a comparative advantage — it is the only institution able to embody universally accepted values and the only platform for organizing fruitful debate on world issues, as well as on the ways and means for settling them.

The United Nations is the body where the weak and the forgotten are able to make their voices heard and to participate in the attainment of a consensus on questions of common interest.

And, indeed, globalization today is a fait accompli; however, we must emphasize that it is not neutral. Good governance, democracy and transparency must be consolidated not only in national terms, but also in international relations.

These principles must be applied both within States as well as with respect to forces that govern globalization and make use of it as before to avoid any form of democratic control.

At the Millennium Summit, the heads of State and Government adopted a document which determines the main outlines of the United Nations action for the twenty-first century.

It is now up to the world community and, thus, up to our States, to civil society and to the private sector to show the necessary determination to implement the guidelines of the Summit quickly and resolutely to make a reality of the message of hope and determination which was expressed by the leaders of the world.

Benin is pleased that special attention was focused on Africa. The initiatives taken for the continent require the firm support of the development partners in the sense of a partnership and solidarity which must basically work on the following: a lasting solution to the debt problem; a more just order for the international trade system; support in terms of financial resources and strengthening production capacity.

We call for the effective implementation of measures to integrate developing countries into the world economy taking account of the special needs of the least-developed countries with a view to halting the deterioration in their situations.

The President took the Chair.

In this regard, the holding of the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries is of particular importance. It is essential that it lead to concrete results.

The elimination of poverty is one of the challenges that the international community was unable to meet in the twentieth century. It is our responsibility to dedicate ourselves to this task. In this regard, we are pleased with the initiative taken by the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to organize a special ministerial meeting to discuss the strategic orientation of UNDP and the need to provide it with the resources essential for it to carry out its missions. Benin is relying on UNDP, the main body for coordinating development assistance, to meet the challenges facing developing countries.

In commending the countries that have announced an increase in their official development assistance, I appeal for the restoration of a balance in favour of core budgetary resources to make it possible to execute the programmes and projects to which Governments accord priority.

With regard to financing for development, it is particularly essential to ensure that resources are better mobilized and that development action involving all partners, including the Bretton Woods institutions, is better coordinated.

All these programmes and plans can be implemented only in an environment in which peace and security are guaranteed. Benin therefore welcomed with great interest the Brahimi report (A/55/305), containing an in-depth analysis of peacekeeping operations.

With regard to Somalia, Benin would also like to express its satisfaction with the leader of the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development and all the facilitators for their courageous initiatives to bring peace to that country through a process of dialogue and reconciliation. We appeal to the international community to lend its support to the consolidation of the process so that Somalia can rapidly become part of the community of nations.

Benin is, and will remain, committed to respecting and promoting human rights, democracy and the rule of law. These principles are inscribed in its Constitution. In that context, since the fifty-second session the General Assembly has supported Benin in its organization of the Fourth International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, to be held in Cotonou from 4 to 6 December 2000. This Conference will undoubtedly be an important stage in the international community's progress towards the consolidation of democratic principles. At the Conference the old and new democracies will exchange their experiences and commit themselves to promoting democracy, peace and political stability and development. Cotonou is preparing a warm welcome, and hopes that there will be a great response to its invitation.

The President: I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Narciso Ntugu Abeso Oyana, Chairman of the delegation of Equatorial Guinea.

Mr. Ntugu Abeso Oyana (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): As head of the delegation of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, and on behalf of His Excellency Don Santiago Nsobeya Efuman, Minister for Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and Francophone Affairs, I am honoured to address the Assembly.

First, I congratulate you, Sir, former Prime Minister of Finland, on your election to preside over the deliberations of the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session. We also sincerely congratulate Mr. Theo-Ben Gurirab, Minister for Foreign Affairs of our sister Republic of Namibia, on the excellent work accomplished during the previous session and on his acclaimed activities in coordinating the preparations for the Millennium Summit, which has just ended.

I also take this opportunity to extend particular congratulations to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, and his team for their full commitment to promoting the mandate of the United Nations, as well as for the plan to strengthen its future work, as reflected in his outstanding report.

We warmly welcome the Republic of Tuvalu to the United Nations.

Just two weeks ago we celebrated within these four walls the most important event in the history of humankind, when our heads of State and Government established general guidelines that must govern the future of our Organization, and that form a strong foundation on which we can, and must, work. We must now follow up all the proposals and recommendations made by our leaders, with the firm goal of implementing them, which would result in a promising future for all nations — those of the North and South and East and West.

His Excellency Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, President of the Republic, head of State and founding chairman of the Democratic Party of Equatorial Guinea, in his address on the first day of the Millennium Summit, affirmed that the turn of the century showed us a threatened world, one constantly in danger of collapse and in a permanent state of uncertainty about its destiny and the survival of humankind, one that conveyed an apocalyptic feeling that was shared by all alike — nations large and small, rich and poor.

In order to follow up the proposals and recommendations of the Millennium Summit, we must start with the fact that democracy begins at home. In our specific case, that means the United Nations, which is our shared home, where the voice of the majority must prevail; that is a basic principle of the historic San Francisco Charter of 1945.

Equatorial Guinea therefore joins the call for urgent, much needed reform and empowerment of the United Nations — an appropriate formula for achieving the fair and just representation of the African continent and other regions of the world, which we regard as a fundamental issue, particularly with regard to the Security Council. If this is not achieved, an environment of distrust may result, as well as a weakening of the role of our great Organization and its all-important task of promoting and ensuring international peace and security.

At present, some individuals enjoy a level of wealth which in the past was inconceivable, while the

victims of poverty continue to suffer intolerable forms of deprivation. The poor remain marginalized and excluded, and day by day their ranks are increasing considerably. Almost a quarter of the world's population now lives in poverty.

Today, pensions and social security protect many individuals from poverty, but poverty in old age remains prevalent around the world. Poverty must be the main concern in United Nations endeavours. The struggle against poverty must be strengthened, and if possible poverty must be eradicated, because the subject of poverty eradication is an ethical, social, political and economic imperative of humankind, as is finding solutions to the conflicts and fratricidal wars that take millions of victims in different parts of the world.

Poverty eradication requires an improvement in economic growth and in employment opportunities. The causes of poverty must also be tackled in the context of sectoral strategies, such as strategies for the environment, food security, health, education, population, immigration, housing, development of human resources, rural development, drinking water and sanitation.

Poverty eradication is therefore one of the primary tasks to which the peoples of the twenty-first century aspire, as an action which will promote the development and prosperity of the human being and will consolidate the culture of democracy and the respect for human rights.

Other problems that need analysis and solutions from the international community are the rights of the child, the integration of women in development and the thorny issue of the foreign debt. As for the rights of the child, we must see to it that the activities and the follow-up of the World Summit for Children are integrated with economic actions to be implemented as a result of the other United Nations conferences held in the 1990s. In this respect, we must see to it that there is renewed thinking about the obligations stemming from the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child by each country and a renewed commitment to them. This must guide our actions in the future.

As for the subject of women, we must eliminate all discriminatory practices against women and respect the procedures and the provisions that are inherent in the convention on this subject, as well as the recommendations stemming from the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995 and from the special session of the General Assembly held in June 2000.

On foreign debt, we fervently appeal to donors that they cancel the foreign debt of the developing countries with the understanding that the funds released will be injected into the most vulnerable sectors in the economies of those countries, such as education, health, water and sanitation.

We are gratified that among the major areas of progress in the twentieth century we see a growing awareness in humankind regarding respect for and promotion of human rights, democracy and good governance. In our country, because of the imperative of survival and the objectives of well-being and progress, we will continue on the agreed path towards the necessary restoration of all the rights to which our vulnerable and marginal groups aspire, in other words women, children, the disabled, refugees and those persons displaced by crisis and disasters. At the present time in Malabo, the capital of our nation, we have officially established the Centre for the Promotion of Human Rights and the Committee in Support of the Equatorial Guinean Child. This Committee was established under the chairmanship of the First Lady of the nation, Her Excellency Mrs. Constancia Mangue de Obiang.

We have also experienced democracy in a spirit of joy with fraternity and without divisiveness, as is described by our national anthem, and also without internal upheaval. The national constitution, known as the Magna Carta of Akonibe, clearly stipulates the establishment and institutionalization of political pluralism in Equatorial Guinea. This has made it possible for a number of political parties to be established. These parties have signed a national covenant with the political party which is in power with the purpose of establishing and strengthening mechanisms for dialogue among the parties. At the present time, all are participating actively in aspiring to political power in the country. In this respect we thank God, the Creator, for having inspired us in this model of participatory and peaceful democracy.

In September 1997 at the Congressional Palace of Bata, the National Economic Conference was held with the participation of all social sectors in our country. In the final report of this important event, we find the recommendations for programmes and projects to be

implemented by the Government in the short, medium and long-term as our economic development strategy.

We cannot conceal our concern at the steady decline in international cooperation resources towards Equatorial Guinea, as we have recently seen in many of the projects and programmes that are implemented in the country with external resources. In this respect we want to avail ourselves of this forum to invite the international community to steadily increase the volume of international cooperation activities in Equatorial Guinea.

With the primary purpose of ensuring peace and security in our subregion, we hope that the United Nations will support the appropriate mechanisms for the maintenance of peace, security, stability, cooperation and development in the Central African subregion, following the political will of the heads of State of that subregion, inspired by the establishment of the Council of Peace and Security in Central Africa (COPAX), a body for political and military agreement among the member countries of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS).

As regards the promotion of measures for the maintenance and the strengthening of peace and security, we have, within COPAX, a Central African Multinational Force (FOMAC) and an Early Warning Mechanism for Central Africa (MARAC). The Government of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea has contributed with determination to financing these institutions so that they can function properly.

We sincerely regret the armed conflicts that exist at the present time on the African continent and in other parts of the world, for example, the case of Angola, the situation of the countries in the Great Lakes region and the crisis in Sierra Leone. We welcome the ceasefire in the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea, and it is our hope that the parties will undertake dialogue with a view to a lasting peace. Likewise, we view with satisfaction the restoration of peace and authority in the sister republic of Somalia. In this respect, we commend the United Nations, the Organization of African Unity, the League of Arab States, the Islamic Conference and all of those who directly or indirectly contributed to the arduous task of restoring peace to that country.

We strongly condemn the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. We support the struggle against crime and the struggle against the global problem of drugs and related crimes and against illicit arms trafficking and international terrorism. We fully support the initiative reaffirmed by the Central American countries in their commitment to make Central America a region of peace, freedom, democracy and development and particularly to gradually and progressively stimulate the Central American Union to ensure a promising future for that region.

In the Middle East, we congratulate the commendable political work done by the President of the United States Bill Clinton to mediate a lasting peace in the region. We hope that a proper interpretation and implementation of the proposals and recommendations of our leaders at the Summit, as well as the outstanding statements made at this distinguished Assembly, will guide us towards a better and more prosperous future for all the nations of the world.

The President: I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. José Adán Guerra, the Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nicaragua.

Mr. Guerra (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): I begin by congratulating you, Sir, on your well deserved election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its first session of the millennium. Your proven skill and vast experience guarantee that you will ably guide the work of this session. I wish also to express our great friendship for and gratitude to Finland, the country you so honourably represent, whose close friendship with Nicaragua has earned our sincere affection. Let me also thank your predecessor, Mr. Theo-Ben Gurirab, for the dedicated way in which he guided our work at the fifty-fourth session.

I wish next to express very special thanks for the contribution made by the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan, who has prepared a valuable report (A/54/2000) on the role of the Organization in the twenty-first century; the report was central in stimulating the discussions conducted by our heads of State or Government at the Millennium Summit — an unprecedented event that laid the groundwork for giving fresh momentum to the United Nations.

The process of renewing the Organization requires the strengthening of its organs and institutions so as to enhance the effectiveness of its endeavours in spheres such as the maintenance of international peace

and security, poverty eradication, the strengthening of health and education programmes and the struggle against the destruction of the environment. Without a doubt, that depends on us, the States Members of the United Nations; we must guarantee the Organization the resources and other means it needs to fulfil its mandate and fully to play its role as a centre for exchange of views and for coordinating the efforts of the world's peoples.

In that connection, let me reaffirm the need to reform the Security Council, an organ that is of vital importance to peace and security. Such reform should include democratic, equitable geographical representation and a better balance between developed and developing countries so that the Council will be able to respond fully and effectively to the present needs of our peoples and to future challenges facing them in the new millennium. Here, we see the veto as another element of this sensitive issue that should be addressed seriously with a view to limiting its application to very specific situations and to possibly eliminating it. For those reasons, we believe it to be of paramount importance to reach consensus on all the issues that are inherent in the very structure of the new international order.

We wish also to stress the importance of speedily beginning a process of international discussions aimed at attaining greater consensus and effectiveness in resolving humanitarian emergencies. In another vein, we believe that we must reaffirm our commitment to maintain and strengthen the universal mission of the United Nations to ensure that all the world's peoples without exception enjoy fair representation. This brings me to reaffirm before the Assembly how important it is to give consideration to the longing of one people to participate with legitimate representation as a full Member of the Organization: I refer here to the Republic of China.

Another important matter that the Organization should continue in the new century to address with greater determination is the war against drug trafficking, organized crime and terrorism. Indeed, the flow of drugs is rapidly increasing in our countries, and in but a few years has become one of the most serious of problems, one that directly affects our economic, political and social life. To address that critical situation, we must give priority to strengthening the national institutions that are mandated to combat this scourge, to enacting and updating national legislation, and to increasing international cooperation and coordination in this sphere. Here, let me observe that Nicaragua has strict laws to punish drug traffickers, and has established a national drug-control plan under which institutions work together in a coordinated manner to attain the stated objectives. We are also working constantly towards greater international cooperation.

At the outset of the new millennium, we see an urgent need to deepen and accelerate progress on ways and means to achieve world disarmament, especially with respect to weapons whose great destructive powers actually threaten life on our planet. We therefore welcomed the outcome of the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which reaffirmed the conviction that full and effective implementation of the Treaty and of the non-proliferation regime in all its aspects plays a vital role in the promotion of international peace and security.

Similarly, we focus special attention on the problem of conventional weapons and on the existence of anti-personnel landmines, which also pose a threat to human safety and security. We therefore believe it is a priority to meet the obligations taken on by each State under international and regional conventions on these subjects. In Nicaragua, one of the gravest consequences of the armed conflict that was, fortunately, overcome in the 1990s is undoubtedly the presence of a vast number of anti-personnel landmines throughout our territory, a situation that even today claims numerous innocent victims. Accordingly, my country, with the support of the international community, is making an enormous effort to resolve the problem permanently. Along with mine-clearance activities, we have begun the process of destroying mine stockpiles, and have thus far destroyed more than 40,000 mines, in strict compliance with the Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. Nicaragua reaffirms its determination to spare no effort in the preparations for the third meeting of States parties to the Ottawa Convention, to be held in Nicaragua in September 2001.

We also believe it to be of the utmost importance to reaffirm our commitment to tolerance and respect for diversity. In that connection, we support the preparatory work for the World Conference against

Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance.

It is essential for the future of the Organization and for that of our peoples that we make a greater effort always to comply with the purposes that half a century ago were laid down in the San Francisco Charter, especially with respect to the maintenance of international peace and security. This can happen only with a firm commitment to non-violence and to the principle of the peaceful settlement of disputes through the procedures established by international law. That is the key element in preventing future conflicts with grave and enduring consequences for mankind.

For us, it is a source of satisfaction that one of the last vestiges of the cold war is on the way to a peaceful resolution. Here I refer to the dialogue between the two Koreas, which has been launched at the highest level and which will without doubt mark the beginning of promising prospects for the Korean peninsula.

Nicaragua also shares the concern of the international community at the persistence of certain conflicts, particularly on the African continent; these have caused devastating damage to property and the loss of countless lives in countries such as Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sierra Leone, Burundi and the Sudan. It is therefore gratifying that in some of those countries steps have been taken to find a solution to their conflicts. These include the 18 June signing of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement by Ethiopia and Eritrea, and the implementation of the Djibouti peace initiative for Sierra Leone. We also hail Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon in accordance with Security Council resolutions, and the stepped-up efforts, since the Camp David summit organized by President Clinton, to find a peaceful settlement between Israel and Palestine.

In the same vein, my country is convinced of the importance of the principle of the self-determination of peoples; we note the urgent need to hold the pending referendum in Western Sahara as soon as possible. To that end, all obstacles to that process must be overcome. Similarly, my country, convinced of the importance of the principle of the self-determination of peoples, makes an appeal regarding the pressing need to hold, as soon as possible, the referendum pending on Western Sahara. To that end, all obstacles to the process must be overcome.

Much progress has been made in this century. Some of the most important achievements have been in the field of the technology revolution. Consequently today we have the great responsibility and duty to begin this new millennium by pooling our efforts to achieve adequate levels of technology transfer to developing countries in order to prevent globalization from becoming a negative phenomenon that exacerbates the marginalization of the poorest countries.

The advantages and the disadvantages entailed by globalization require the developing countries to work together in order to increase their opportunities to successfully confront this phenomenon. An example of this is the decision of the Presidents of Guatemala, Nicaragua and El Salvador to sign a tri-national agreement aimed at giving fresh impetus to the Central American integration process by providing an appropriate political framework for the establishment of a regional customs union, a process launched by El Salvador and Guatemala and which Nicaragua and Honduras have recently joined.

Apart from integration initiatives, continued efforts to achieve solidarity through cooperation for development are vitally important. Nonetheless, we feel it must be emphasized that cooperation activities must be accompanied by appropriate management that offers favourable conditions for small economies to have access to large international markets, obtaining fair prices for their exports of raw materials and manufactured goods. In this respect, we warmly welcome the decision to convene the high-level intergovernmental event on financing for development in 2001. That event is of paramount importance to the efforts being made to achieve the objectives established by the Millennium Summit.

The strengthening of the multilateral trade system is also of great importance, which includes, among other things, the prompt and urgent convening of a round of trade negotiations within the framework of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in which problems are addressed in a comprehensive and integral manner, to lead to an effective reduction of tariff and non-tariff barriers. Free trade and the rules governing it should be implemented within the WTO framework so that they benefit all, particularly the poor countries.

It is also essential that the most heavily indebted poor countries be able to aspire to break the vicious

circle of poverty. In this regard, as stated by Mr. Arnoldo Alemán Lacayo, President of Nicaragua, during the Millennium Summit,

> "the unbearable weight of an immense external debt [represents] an insurmountable barrier to overcoming poverty and unemployment. In this respect, we are pleased to note the interest recently shown by the developed countries and multilateral financial institutions in seeking alternatives that would substantially relieve the situation of the heavily indebted poor countries. We hope that this interest will soon be reflected in specific and meaningful actions, so that countries such as Nicaragua can break this vicious circle of poverty and look towards a future with greater opportunities and expectations for sustainability and progress." (*A/55/PV.3*)

Another important challenge to which we must devote great effort is the conservation of natural resources and the global environment; this is vitally important for the future of humanity, as well as for the prevention of and response to natural disasters. Nicaragua has been cruelly punished by natural phenomena; the effects of hurricane Mitch, which lashed the Central American region in 1998, and of strong telluric movement shook the eastern part of our country, causing loss of human life and considerable material damage are still fresh. Given that reality, Nicaragua, with the valuable assistance of the United Nations Development Programme, became the third Latin American country to adopt a modern law to take the necessary measures to establish an integrated system for disaster prevention and response. Moreover, despite its limited resources, Nicaragua has channelled great energy into the search for a model of sustainable development and of conservation of its natural resources. In that regard, the Government of Nicaragua has established the National Council on Sustainable Development, a pluralistic body in which all the main sectors of civil society participate, in order to promote actively, in accordance with Agenda 21, the implementation of this model of sustainable development.

Our leaders have had the historic opportunity to undertake decisive commitments for the future of humanity. Nicaragua fully shares and reaffirms its commitment to the basic values contained in the Millennium Declaration: freedom and equality, so that we may all live decently, without poverty or violence, but rather in good health and with education; equity and solidarity, since all peoples of the world have the duty to share and to exchange knowledge and experience that tomorrow will be decisive for human development; tolerance and non-violence, since we can forge ahead only if people respect each other and if States are always prepared to understand each other and resolve their differences through peaceful means; and respect for nature, in order to be able to leave to our children a future in which they will feel proud and optimistic, in which they will walk with their heads high, confident that they are on the right path.

Today is the time to sow, so that tomorrow we will be able to harvest. Today is when we must be aware that we have a shared responsibility, collective and individual, to strengthen the United Nations in order to be able to build a more just, secure and equitable international system for all.

The President: It is now my intention to make some concluding remarks. Thereafter I shall call on those delegations that wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

Let me start by again emphasizing the uniqueness of this Millennium Assembly, coming as it does after the historic Millennium Summit, attended by 147 heads of State or Government, the largest gathering ever of world leaders. The challenge facing this Millennium Assembly is to put into action the commitments made by world leaders in their Summit Declaration. The Assembly must maintain the millennium spirit and proceed with a sense of urgency, not with a sense of business as usual.

The Secretary-General reinforced this in his statement opening the general debate, in which he set the tone for the two-week discussion. He said it was vital to find the means to make the Summit's promise a reality and to turn the United Nations into a more effective instrument in pursuing the priorities outlined by the heads of State or Government.

Let me now turn to some of the themes of the past two weeks. The most critical issue facing the international community — the maintenance of peace and security and the role of the United Nations in it — was the focus of many speakers. The need for improving the Organization's peacekeeping capacity was emphasized. In this regard, the debate reaffirmed the mandate given by the Summit to consider expeditiously the recommendations of the Panel on

United Nations Peace Operations. It was noted that today these operations are often comprehensive and complex, involving disarming and demobilizing combatants, supervising elections, monitoring human rights and training local police forces.

Some speakers referred to the need to develop a culture of prevention in order to combat conflict.

In the context of peacekeeping, reference was also made to the need to close gaps between the tasks we ask the United Nations to carry out and the resources we make available to it.

The importance of promoting and respecting human rights as a prerequisite to international security was also emph- -zed.

The issue of Security Council reform and the need for its composition to reflect the realities of today in order to make the Council more representative and more legitimate was a theme repeated by many. Work for the comprehensive reform of the Security Council in all its aspects was also called for in the Summit Declaration. The statements made indicate — I hope — that there is a willingness by the membership to move forward on this issue.

A strong call was made in the general debate to implement the goals and commitments of the development agenda of the 1990s. That agenda was reinforced in the Millennium Declaration, which expressed the commitment of our heads of State and Government. Many statements rightly pointed out that we are far away from the mutually agreed global development targets. Today almost one half of the world's population still lives on less than $2 per day. There were several calls to bring to fruition the commitments made in the Millennium Declaration to reduce poverty levels by the year 2015. It was also reiterated that conflict and poverty go hand-in-hand. Sustainable development addresses not only the economic and social needs of people, it also contributes to lasting peace. The same goes for tolerance and respect for diversity within societies. I strongly share the view expressed that respect for human rights is one of the cornerstones of development.

Many statements referred to the unsustainable debt burden of the poorest countries and to the unfavourable terms of trade for many developing countries. The need to address the debt burden of heavily indebted poor countries was reiterated. The current session of the General Assembly needs to address development financing and the roles of various forums and institutions at the forthcoming financing for development event. In my view, decisions on the format, timing and venue of that event must be made without delay.

The discussion touched among many other aspects of human life that require our common attention: the situation of the children of the world, illiteracy, HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases, racism and racial discrimination, the deterioration of our environment and the pollution of the soil, water and atmosphere, and lack of food security. Many of those issues will be addressed during the current session of the General Assembly.

To mention one of the most acute issues, there is a need for an early decision on the HIV/AIDS special session. I have sensed an urgency from the floor to address this particular issue. To put this plea into perspective, we should remember that every minute several people — mostly young persons and very often girls and young women — are infected with HIV. The pandemic also underscores the need to include health issues in national education and literacy programmes.

Globalization and its impacts, both positive and negative, was one of the overriding themes of the discussion. Globalization provides both opportunities and challenges. Positive impacts have been identified, such as increased economic growth and an improved standard of living. The major challenges, however, remain how to reduce the gap between the rich and the poor within and among countries and how to share the benefits of globalization in a more equitable way. In the course of the debate it was also reiterated that to address globalization we have to think in a multidimensional way. Globalization encompasses not only economic dimensions, but also political, social, environmental, technological and cultural ones. That is why the responsibility for shaping globalization cannot be left to market forces alone. There is a need to guide the process of globalization with political decisions. This is where the General Assembly has a role to play.

As mentioned during the general debate, all this requires enhanced international cooperation, building bridges between societies and improved global governance. International and multinational actors, such as the United Nations, the Bretton Woods

institutions, the World Trade Organization and various regional organizations, are becoming increasingly important in harnessing the positive powers of globalization.

Information and communications technologies have an important role in managing globalization, and as vehicles for development. Helping to bridge the digital divide by making information and communications technologies the servants of development is one of the challenges ahead. No one should be denied access to knowledge.

Many spoke of the importance of environmental protection and sustainable development issues while pointing ahead to the Rio + 10 review conference, to be held in 2002. In this context, global warming, climate change and water were among the specific issues referred to. The special concerns of small island States were also raised.

Another important theme of the debate related to disarmament issues. It was noted by many that lasting peace will not be secured until weapons of mass destruction have been eradicated and the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons has been addressed. Some speakers stressed that in the face of massive human rights violations, the United Nations must not remain paralysed. Others felt that the principle of State sovereignty and non-intervention in their internal affairs was a basic principle of the United Nations Charter.

A number of speakers referred to the need to look afresh at the application of economic sanctions and to the fact that, although they could be used as a tool for peace, sometimes they were counterproductive and penalized the population rather than the targeted rulers. Some said that time had shown that economic sanctions had been unable to achieve their objective. Others pointed to the burden imposed on third parties. There were calls for a review of the sanctions regimes to make them more effective and better targeted.

Finally, let me say that I was pleased to listen to the statements appreciating the need for civil society, in its broadest sense, to participate in the work of the United Nations. I believe that the significance and relevance of the United Nations in the future will depend on our ability to involve civil society in our work. It has played a pivotal role in setting our global agenda. We must let them also participate as our valued partners in its implementation.

Overall, to quote one speaker, the debate reaffirmed the commitment of the international community to the validity and importance of multilateral action as being

> "the most realistic approach to transnational problems in an increasingly globalized world".

I echo this sentiment and look forward to this being a most productive fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

May I remind members that statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second intervention and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Çengizer (Turkey): The Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia, Mr. Vartan Oskanian, addressing the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly on 18 September, remarked that the region was adversely affected by the lack of formal relations between Armenia and Turkey, and he went on to bring forth the well-known allegations concerning the tragic events that took place in the early part of the last century.

It is one thing to express dismay at the lack of formal relations and quite another to fervently defame the other party while purporting to wish for a normal relationship. To be precise, it is the Armenian side that insists on imposing conditions on Turkey. It is the Armenian side that insists on the recognition of its singular interpretation of history as the sole and only truthful version. It is time for the Armenian side to look into history with much more impartiality.

What Mr. Oskanian presents as genocide was a most unfortunate tragedy that befell the Turks and Armenians alike at a time when the Ottoman Empire — decrepit, forlorn, partly occupied, lacking means, industrial infrastructure and technological prowess; and further incapacitated by widespread epidemics and starvation — was in the thrall of an imperialist assault.

Today, on this historic threshold, it is not the time to focus on old enmity and hostilities. History is best left to historians, not politicians. It is indeed unfortunate that Turkey and Armenia, two ancient nations living in the same geographical area, find

themselves without normal relations. Precisely in this context, the fact that Mr. Oskanian desires normal relations is gratifying, yet it is ironic, to say the least, that this call is made without grace and is tantamount to asking Turkey to accept a distortion of history. Allegations of this sort will not help to bring about what is lacking. Rather, they do the opposite.

It is also incomprehensible to see a Government aspire to normal relations with its neighbours while continuing defiantly to occupy one fifth of a neighbouring country's territory, which it has done for almost a decade now.

Mr. Ileka (Democratic Republic of the Congo) (*spoke in French*): My delegation had no intention of taking the floor at this late stage of our work, especially following the remarkable statement made by Mr. Yerodia Abdoulaye Ndombasi, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

My delegation will therefore be brief. We will not respond to the wild imaginings and pointlessly provocative remarks made from the rostrum by our sister delegations from Burundi and Rwanda, which have deemed it necessary to insult the intelligence of the representatives of the States Members of our universal Organization in an attempt to justify their occupation of the eastern part of the territory of my country, in flagrant violation of the Charter of the United Nations, under the pretext of fallacious, so-called security considerations.

My delegation would like the entire world to know that the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, weary of a futile and senseless war of aggression, is seeking and desires peace. We want to live in a strong and unified Republic of the Congo, with its full sovereignty and territorial integrity restored. My people want to coexist peacefully with the peoples of the nine States bordering the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

My Government, whose main task it is to ensure the well-being of the population, is open to all initiatives and suggestions that might put a quick end to this barbaric situation, which has bloodied the entire Great Lakes region. This could be through the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement, as improved upon by Security Council resolution 1304 (2000), which demands that Uganda and Rwanda, which have violated the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, withdraw their troops without delay; through direct negotiations between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the aggressor countries, whose representatives here have not denied the fact that their countries have perpetrated acts of aggression against mine; or through direct negotiations between the Government and those of our Congolese brothers who have decided to resolve conflicts through the use of arms.

What is essential is that we be able to coordinate our efforts in order to obtain lasting peace throughout the region. This might be guaranteed by the international community, perhaps through an international conference. The populations that comprise our subregion, with their wide cultural and ethnic diversity, deserve peace. They have a right to peace, without which any hope for human dignity, for well-being and development, would be in vain and compromised.

Mr. Harrison (United Kingdom): I should like briefly to reply to the remarks about the Chagos archipelago made this morning by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Regional Cooperation of Mauritius.

The British Government maintains that the British Indian Ocean Territory is British and has been since 1814. It does not recognize the sovereignty claim of the Mauritian Government. But the British Government has recognized Mauritius as the only State that has a right to assert a claim of sovereignty when the United Kingdom relinquishes its own sovereignty. Successive British Governments have given undertakings to the Government of Mauritius that the Territory will be ceded when no longer required for defence purposes.

The British Government remains open to discussions regarding arrangements governing the British Indian Ocean Territory or the future of the Territory. The British Government has stated that when the time comes for the Territory to be ceded it will liaise closely with the Government of Mauritius.

The question of access to the British Indian Ocean Territory is at present before the courts in the United Kingdom and is therefore sub judice. The Government of the United Kingdom has the matter under careful consideration and cannot comment further.

Mrs. Assounany (Comoros) *(spoke in French)*: I have the honour to make this statement on behalf of the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Islamic Federal Republic of Comoros.

I merely wish to give some necessary clarifications in response to what was said by my colleague from our neighbouring State, the Foreign Minister of Mauritius. It is very regrettable that some neighbours of our country, to which we are bound by our common interests, whether within the Indian Ocean Commission or because we share certain Indian Ocean values, and some other countries, for reasons unknown to us thus far, are appealing to the international community not to support but rather to condemn a national process that allowed for the amicable resolution of a crisis that would have led to a military confrontation in Anjouan. The Assembly is familiar with the serious consequences of the use of weapons in large countries, and they are even more serious in a small country such as ours. The countries in question defend within regional and international bodies the principle of the peaceful settlement of disputes, which is essential and precious to our Organization.

Furthermore, with regard to the present regime, it was the intervention of the national development army on 30 April 1999, when disturbances over Anjouan broke out in Moroni, that prevented civil war in Comoros, where the political power of the time was paralysed and the Comorian people rejoiced at that intervention.

I wish to recall also that the electoral timetable established in 1999 has not been implemented precisely because of the refusal of the Anjouan party to sign the Antananarivo accord. Today, with the signing of the Fumboni Joint Declaration, the way is open to again discuss together this Comorian question. The declaration preserves the unity and territorial integrity of Comoros, and the new Comorian entity as a whole is recognized as the only subject of international law within the borders recognized by the international community.

We understand perfectly well the desire of the Organization of African Unity and neighbouring countries to defend the unity and territorial integrity of our country. But we believe that their concern is not equal to ours, as Comorians with interests to defend and to preserve, and could not transcend that. One cannot be more royalist than the king.

We would like to reassure all those who are concerned about the essential aspect of this matter that it is preserved by the Fomboni Declaration. Furthermore, this process enjoys the support of the League of Arab States, which recently adopted a resolution along these lines at its Council of Ministers meeting in Cairo. Other leading partners of our country also support this process.

We therefore leave it to the international community to appraise this situation in order to judge whether we should stick to extremist positions, which are harmful to the population, or find a compromise among Comorians to put an end to the suffering of the people, instead of choosing arms over dialogue.

Mr. Hussein (Ethiopia): When my country, signed the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities with Eritrea, it did so with a full commitment to work for a comprehensive peace agreement. It believed, and still does, that the Agreement went beyond the simple silencing of the gun. The Agreement's spirit was also recognized by a Security Council appeal to both Ethiopia and Eritrea as covering all acts of hostilities, including the kind which we heard about from the Eritrean Foreign Minister.

When my Foreign Minister addressed the Assembly, he did so looking at the future, not at the past. His counterpart, the Eritrean Foreign Minister, alas, promised us in the first part of his speech, which we welcomed, that he would do the same, but went on to the old story of trying to drag us into the quagmire that we thought we were trying to get out of.

We thought that if we had — as we have — matters to raise, this should be done within the context of the negotiations leading to a comprehensive peace agreement; there is a place for it, rather than bringing it up in this Assembly, thus taking your time, Mr. President, and that of everybody else at the close of this general debate. However, under the circumstances, I am left with no choice but to take up some of the points that have been raised in order to set the record straight.

We have been accused of making Eritrea a victim of aggression. We are told that it was a country which had established good relations with all its neighbours. What we have is the opposite. We have a country that became independent in 1993.

It began the following year by attacking one of its five neighbours; in 1995, it attacked a second; in 1996, a third. It began 1997 by quarrelling with its closest neighbour, Ethiopia, leading to an invasion of its sovereign territory in 1998.

This reminds me of an Arabic saying: "He hit me and then hastened to launch a complaint". This is what has happened in our region. When we consider the accusation of the use of force by Ethiopia, we see that it was only an act of self-defence that Ethiopia — after two years of literally begging for peace — was forced to undertake to reverse that aggression. Eritrea talks of expansion and recolonization, but many of us in Ethiopia – particularly in this Government to which I belong – fought for the right of the Eritreans to self-determination and supported them, although many others in my country in fact never wanted Eritrea to secede from Ethiopia. It took political courage to support Eritrea and we have no regrets over that. But then, for Eritrea to say that such a country's Government, which was the first to recognize its independence, has intentions to recolonize it — I think that is laughable, to put it very mildly.

If we had wanted, as a minimum — even without going to war — to deny Eritrea its rightful place, we would have simply not given it recognition. We know from our experience in international law that a number of things have to be clarified before others recognize a country's independence. We have a very good example in our own region of a situation in which one part of another country that seceded and has not been recognized to this day — although that country did not have a functioning capital and still does not — despite the good efforts that have been undertaken in Djibouti.

So Ethiopia cannot be accused of preparing for another war to recolonize Eritrea. There is no such intention; there cannot be and will not be. We have turned our back on war.

But let us look, finally, at the issue of who is still bent on militarizing its own society. In May 1998, Ethiopia had 54,000 troops and not one single soldier on its border with Eritrea. On the other hand, Eritrea, with only 3.5 million people — against Ethiopia's 60 million — had over 200,000 troops in May 1998. Which country had a different agenda for developing good-neighbourliness and for peace? We demobilized almost 1 million troops under the previous Government to reach the figure of 54,000, and we are prepared to de-escalate again when the right time comes, because our region does not need war. We have to fight poverty, illiteracy and backwardness, not each other.

Finally, as to the issue of this brutal violation of human rights, which has been raised as a distraction, again I would just pass over it by saying that this is not and cannot be proven by anything that Ethiopia has done. In fact, through our Prime Minister, we have brought to the attention of the international community — including your own country, Mr. President, at the highest level — what has been happening and perpetrated by the other side against innocent Ethiopian civilians in their own country, even after the signing of the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities. It was only a few weeks ago that Eritrea finally signed the Fourth Geneva Convention — it was the last country to sign it — and for the first time allowed the International Committee of the Red Cross access to people it had been supposed to have access to.

Mr. Abelian (Armenia): It was not and is not my intention to open a discussion in this General Assembly Hall on the issue of the Armenian genocide and its recognition or on relations between Armenia and Turkey. However, since reference to these issues was made by the representative of Turkey, I would like to make a few points.

The twentieth century began for Armenians with the tragedy of genocide and mass deportations in the Ottoman Empire in 1915 and 1923. The first genocide of the twentieth century unfolded in full force and continued until it had consumed the lives of 1.5 million Armenians. That genocide witnessed rape, assault, plunder and the murder of an entire population.

Reference was made by the representative of Turkey to scholars. I have to say that the scholars have done their job. The Armenian genocide is well documented in the relevant archives, including the Turkish, British, American and Russian archives. Let me just make a few references to those archives. I would like to repeat the question here asked by British Foreign Minister Lord Curzon at the Lausanne Conference of 1923, directed at Ismet Pasha, then the head of the Turkish delegation. He said:

> "There were 3 million Armenians in Asia Minor before the war. Now there are only 130,000. Where are the rest? Did they commit suicide or disappear voluntarily?"

I would also like to make another reference to a diplomat of that time. The Ambassador of Germany, representing a Government allied with Turkey, also quickly realized what was taking place in 1915. In July 1915, he wrote:

> "The Turks began deportations from areas not threatened with invasion. This fact, and the manner in which the relocation is being carried out, demonstrate that the Government is really pursuing the aim of destroying the Armenian race in Turkey."

By January 1917, he reported that

> "the policy of extermination has largely been achieved. The current leadership of Turkey fully subscribes to this policy."

All these archives are available and there is no need for scholars to open or to do new research. It has already been done. Based on those and other facts, even back in 1919, the Kemalist court tried and convicted a number of high-ranking Young Turk officials for their role in what the Turkish Government then called the "massacre and destruction" of the Armenians.

The Armenian genocide showed that it could be done. The policy of genocide pursued by the Ottoman Empire went unchecked by other Powers and in time the possibility of such a policy encouraged new brutalities. The most striking evidence of this was the now well-known rhetorical flourish with which Hitler responded to the nervous questions of some of his advisors vis-à-vis the plans for the invasion of Poland in 1939: "Who, after all, speaks today of the annihilation of the Armenians?"

Indeed, there is no national history in a vacuum and Turkey's continuing denial of the genocide of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire has only intensified our aspirations to historical justice. Many nations have found that there is spiritual or moral resurrection in the search for validation through truth and in facing their own past squarely. As President Kocharian of Armenia said in this Hall two weeks ago, addressing the Millennium Summit:

> "Penitence is not humiliation; rather, it elevates individuals and nations." *(A/55/PV.6)*

The Armenian genocide is an undeniable fact. When the term "genocide" was invented in 1944 to describe the systematic destruction of an entire people, its author Raphael Lemkin illustrated the term by saying it was the "sort of thing that Hitler did to the Jews and the Turks did to the Armenians".

Many Parliaments of the world have recognized the Armenian genocide. A resolution of the European Parliament in 1987 referred to the fact that the recognition of the Armenian genocide would be viewed as a profoundly humane act of moral rehabilitation towards the Armenians which could only bring honour to the Turkish Government. Regretfully, denial, which has become an integral part of genocide, often reinforces the sense of insecurity, abandonment and betrayal. But denial is the continuation of genocide; some even note that it is the final act of genocide.

I would like to again refer to the statement of His Excellency Mr. Vartan Oskanian made here this week as part of the Millennium Assembly general debate. I would like to refer in particular to what he said about how the South Caucasus region continues to remain adversely affected by the lack of formal relations between Armenia and our neighbour Turkey. We did indeed, from day one of our independence, opt for normalization of relations and the establishment of diplomatic ties. But Turkey insisted and continues to insist on certain conditions related to Nagorny Karabakh and to the recognition of the Armenian genocide. The economic blockade imposed by Turkey on Armenia of course negatively affects the peaceful solution of the Nagorny Karabakh conflict and seriously hampers the implementation of the most important regional economic programmes.

Armenia remains committed to the peaceful resolution of the Nagorny Karabakh conflict, and we will continue to work intensively with the co-chairs of the Minsk Group to seek peaceful solutions to the conflict. We are equally ready to maintain direct contact with Azerbaijan, in order to search for a compromise.

We are confident that constructive dialogue with Turkey, as was mentioned by the Foreign Minister of Armenia, will allow us to jointly pave a way towards cooperation and good-neighbourly relations between our two nations.

Mr. Tekle (Eritrea): The representative of Ethiopia has raised two issues. The first issue, the question of aggression, was dealt with in previous

meetings, but it does honour to Orwellianism to call the defence of territorial integrity aggression.

We are not talking about the past, but rather the commitment to the future. And here it is one's deeds and not one's rhetoric that becomes important.

It is not unknown to those who have closely followed the peace negotiations — especially the facilitators — that the Government of Ethiopia launched a systematic undertaking to subvert and render meaningless — indeed to replace outright — the Organization of African Unity (OAU) Framework Agreement with another agreement, which was not only totally alien to, but also contrary to the letter and spirit of the OAU Framework Agreement and the modalities of implementation — which it had purportedly accepted without any reservations. This campaign started in Algiers on the same day, only three hours after the Algiers agreement was signed, and it was pursued during the Washington, D.C., meeting in early July.

Not many days after the signing of the Algiers agreement, the Government of Ethiopia resumed its harassment, detention, torture, extra-judicial killing and deportation of innocent Eritreans and Eritreans of Ethiopian origin. Eritrean civilians in sovereign Eritrean territory occupied by Ethiopian forces are being routinely subjected to systematic harassment and terror tactics, as well as torture, rape, confiscation and destruction of homes and property. Fifteen thousand Eritreans were only a few weeks ago expelled from their ancestral places of abode and farms in occupied Eritrean territory. Contrary to the letter and spirit of both the OAU Framework Agreement and the Algiers agreement, the Ethiopian Government has intensified its malicious ethnic hate campaign against Eritreans and their Government.

These are not deeds of peace. These are deeds of war. Now it cannot to be denied that the Eritrean Government had undertaken, with the active collaboration of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the voluntary repatriation of two groups of Ethiopians that had been residing in Eritrea. The first group consisted of those Ethiopians who had peacefully and freely resided in Eritrea for a long time, until they, along with their Eritrean co-inhabitants, had been internally displaced by the invasion and occupation of Eritrean towns and villages. These people were sharing temporary shelters with displaced Eritreans — and sharing the meagre supplies that are provided in temporary shelters — and requested the assistance of both the Eritrean Government and the ICRC so that they could return to Ethiopia. The second group consisted of Ethiopians who did not possess valid residency or work permits. They too had requested assistance so that they could go home.

These two groups were interviewed by the ICRC. The number of people in both groups was about 11,000. In addition, however, there were very few — a handful, really — who had been expelled because they had become undesirable aliens. In all instances the repatriation strictly adhered to the letter and spirit of the procedures and standards established by the ICRC and recognized by the international community.

Now repatriation took place on the same road by which — only a few days earlier — Ethiopian authorities had deported Eritreans and Eritreans of Ethiopian origin. And this repatriation was initially approved by the Ethiopian Government. There is incontrovertible evidence that those who had departed Eritrea had arrived in Ethiopia safely, and thus any stories that may have emanated from Ethiopia about the danger on the road or the harm that befell these people cannot be taken seriously.

The Ethiopian Government claims that the Eritrean Government was detaining Ethiopians in camps. This claim would be too farcical for comment if it were not a smear campaign. There are no such camps in Eritrea. Eritrea has throughout the conflict opened its doors to human rights non-governmental organizations, such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch. In any case, since Eritrea signed the Geneva Conventions, the ICRC is also — in addition to its previous regular visits to Ethiopian civilians — conducting regular visits to Ethiopian prisoners of war. Even before Eritrea signed the Geneva Conventions its record during the liberation struggle and afterwards was recognized by these non-governmental organizations as being one of the best. Can Ethiopia, which signed the Geneva Conventions only three years ago — although it is a founding Member of the United Nations — claim to have such a record? Let the reports of Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch serve as witnesses.

Mr. Çengizer (Turkey): It is not my intention to dwell here on our disagreements with Armenia. However, after the remarks of the representative of

Armenia I am compelled to say a few brief words in response to just two points.

The representative of Armenia referred to Lord Curzon inquiring about Armenians. Again, Lord Curzon was not an historian. He was a politician. As a matter of fact, Lord Curzon had every reason to be a partisan and partial politician with regard to Turkey. After all, he was negotiating with Turkey in the aftermath of the First World War and in the aftermath of the triumph of the Turkish struggle.

Especially -- and as a last point — I strongly deplore the parallel drawn by the Armenian representative concerning Hitler. I would like to remind the representative of just this: there were no Kristallnachts in Turkey, as there were in Germany. And there were no Jewish armed gangs marauding the hills of Bavaria and the streets of Berlin, as we had with Armenians in Turkey. The historical context is vastly different, and I really and strongly deplore the drawing of this parallel to what Hitler did.

This concludes my remarks, but I should also say that it is our sincere wish, at this turning of the century, to come to an understanding regarding the tragic events. Of course the Armenian side should also refer to the more than 2 million Turks and Muslims who lost their lives under the same tragic conditions.

Mr. Kouliev (Azerbaijan) (*spoke in Russian*): I am also compelled to respond to the statement by the representative of Armenia in which he referred to the problem of Nagorny Karabakh. The settlement of the problem of Nagorny Karabakh in Azerbaijan is being hampered primarily, as was already stated, by almost ten years of occupation of 20 per cent of the territory of Azerbaijan by Armenian armed formations, as a result of which one out of every eighth inhabitants of my country has become a refugee. Azerbaijan has many times stated that it is committed to a peaceful settlement of this conflict, but the Armenian side is showing that it does not want to settle this conflict and is preventing the establishment in the southern Caucasus of conditions favourable for the development of relations with neighbouring countries of the region.

Mr. Hussein (Ethiopia): I very much regret that I have to speak again. We did not intend to use even the first right of reply, but we were forced to do so. I will be brief. We speak of the commitment to the future. Let us practise it.

For the record, Ethiopia signed the Geneva Convention fifty years ago — not three years ago — as can be seen from the record. There is a big difference between fifty and three. An ethnic hate campaign was mentioned once again. Just listen to the propaganda that Ethiopia hears day in and day out in the different languages of Ethiopia from the radio in Asmara and, unless ethnic hate campaign is to have a different meaning, we do not have that, as can be seen from the fact that we still have at least 400,000 Eritreans living in Ethiopia, many of them Ethiopian citizens, but half of them citizens of Eritrea. We have many senior Ethiopians of Eritrean origin in the Ethiopian Government, including the Foreign Ministry, the Prime Minister's office, the defence forces and so on. That does not describe a country that is practising an ethnic hate campaign — it describes a country that has ethnically cleansed all Ethiopians, a campaign that started at a time when we supposedly had good relations way back in 1999 before it became independent, when thousands of Ethiopians were unceremoniously kicked out without their property and many of them remain interned up to this date.

Finally, only recently in July, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) testified and indicated its concern, not orally, but by issuing a press statement that can be seen by everybody, whereby they indicated their concern by the way the Ethiopians in Eritrea were being kicked out over swollen rivers, areas filled with mines — something I would not call repatriation in a very humane way. I do not wish to be personal but I find it ironic that these statements are being made by someone — when some of us on this side were fighting for the democratization of Ethiopia and also for the rights of the Eritrean people to self-determination — someone who had a very senior post in the Ethiopian Government and who was opposed to the independence of Eritrea.

Mr. Abelian (Armenia): I apologize for taking the floor once again, but I would like to make a few additional comments on the remarks by the representative of Turkey.

Once again, the end of the general debate in the Assembly is not the place to discuss the recognition of Armenian genocide, but I would like to remind the representative of Turkey that the Armenian genocide began with the Kristallnacht. That was the first day, 24 April 1915, the first day of genocide when more than 300 Armenian intellectuals were brutally

murdered by the Turkish authorities, thus signalling the beginning of mass annihilation of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire.

I must also remind the representative of Turkey that the representative of Armenia did not make a comparison, the comparison was made by Rafael Lempkin, and I quoted him. It was Rafael Lempkin who introduced the word "genocide". And the comparison of Rafael Lempkin I quote once again: "the sort of things Hitler did to the Jews and the Turks did to the Armenians". The words quoted were not those of the representative of Armenia.

The representative of Turkey also referred to the fact that two million Turks were killed, but Armenians were not involved in those killings, because Armenians had already been killed when those events took place.

I wish also to refer to the question of Nagorny Karabakh. As I said in my previous intervention, I would like to repeat, once again, that during the last six years, the military phase of the conflict has ceased and Armenia remains committed to a lasting resolution that will provide for peace and security for Nagorny Karabakh and a continuous link with Armenia and we will work intensively with the chairs of the Minsk group for maintaining the ceasefire regime and I reaffirm we will maintain direct contact with Azerbaijan in order to search for compromise.

However, we think that direct negotiations between Armenia and Nagorny Karabakh will be more productive, as it is the people of Nagorny Karabakh who will ultimately determine their own destiny.

Mr. Tekle (Eritrea): Very briefly, on two issues of fact. The ICRC was involved in almost all of the voluntary repatriations that took place. When it was not, it could not do so because the Ethiopian Government refused to cooperate and those who benefited from voluntary repatriation could not benefit from ICRC assistance. The report by the ICRC resident in Ethiopia, which was mentioned by the representative of Ethiopia with regard to occurrences in Eritrea, has actually been repudiated by the Headquarters of the ICRC.

Finally, I will not indulge myself by answering ad hominem arguments. Ad hominem arguments are the tactics of the weak defending the bankrupt policies of an immoral and illegitimate regime.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 9?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 1.45 p.m.

United Nations A/55/PV.29

General Assembly

Fifty-fifth session

Official Records

29th plenary meeting
Wednesday, 27 September 2000, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Holkeri ..... (Finland)

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Agenda item 10 (*continued*)

Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/55/1)

The President: Members will recall that the Secretary-General presented his report to the General Assembly at the 10th plenary meeting on 12 September 2000.

Mr. Kolby (Norway): At the outset, I would like to commend the Secretary-General for his excellent report on the work of the Organization (A/55/1) to the General Assembly.

Furthermore, in his opening statement to the General Assembly, the Secretary-General pointed out that the time has come to roll up our sleeves and start putting into action the bold pledges our "captains and kings" made during the Millennium Summit. I can assure you that my Government strongly shares this sentiment and that we will work with you and our fellow delegates to make this noble goal come true.

Among its important messages, the report highlights — and thus concurs with the Millennium Declaration — the fact that the elimination of poverty must be our first priority among the many pledges to be fulfilled. The fight to eliminate poverty is an overriding challenge, and there has been considerable progress in addressing this issue. But half of the world's population still must try to survive on less than two dollars a day.

We are pleased to note that the Secretary-General in his report focuses on girls' education as a critical factor in the eradication of poverty. We hope the launch of the informal task force in April will increase the efforts undertaken within the United Nations system to promote girls' education. The fight against poverty, underdevelopment and environmental degradation must be at the top of our agenda.

The HIV/AIDS pandemic, as the Secretary-General points out, has become a serious development crisis. In many countries the epidemic has had dramatic consequences, and there is a need for additional financial resources and development assistance to combat the virus. My Government welcomes the fact that an inter-agency task force chaired by the World Health Organization (WHO) has developed a strategy for improving the access of AIDS victims to anti-AIDS drugs. Norway has been a major contributor to health programmes related to HIV/AIDS, and we will continue to support these programmes. Recently the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation made approximately $5 million available to the WHO for health programmes in Africa.

In his report, the Secretary-General also draws particular attention to the importance of conflict prevention. In particular, we welcome his emphasis on strengthening the United Nations early warning and conflict prevention capacities. But we must all make the efforts needed to provide sufficient regular budget funding for the conflict prevention efforts of the United Nations.

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The success of these efforts will, as the Secretary-General points out, hinge upon close collaboration with Member States, regional organizations and others. We have witnessed significant successes, but we have also during the last ten years uncovered disturbing and tragic weaknesses. We must learn from failures of the past, and improved coordination of our efforts can contribute to a better understanding of both the problems and the solutions.

Norway therefore supports the recommendations in the report of the United Nations Panel on Peace Operations headed by Ambassador Brahimi. Norway stands ready to engage in a broad dialogue on how to ensure the speedy and efficient implementation of recommendations in the Brahimi Report (A/55/305).

The conflicts in East Timor and Sierra Leone continue to cause immeasurable suffering for hundreds of thousands of people and place burdens upon the response system of the United Nations. I am happy to note that the United Nations still is intensely involved in the efforts to find solutions to these conflicts, in close cooperation with other organizations.

In his report, the Secretary-General deals extensively with the situation in Africa. As outlined by the Secretary-General, the United Nations is involved in a large number of development programmes and other activities in Africa. Progress is, however, dependent on resources that in too many cases are scarce. Norway agrees with the Secretary-General that Africa's problems must remain of the highest priority for the Organization.

Important reforms of the Organization have been implemented, and we appreciate the fact that the Secretary-General is dedicated to pursuing the reform process further. In these efforts he can rely on the full support of Norway.

Mr. Ryan (Ireland): I welcome this comprehensive and stimulating report from the Secretary-General on the work of our Organization (A/55/1). In his introduction he notes that the turn of the millennium provides a unique vantage point from which to view humanity's progress and challenges. In fact, the Secretary-General himself was the driving force behind ensuring that we made full use of this vantage point at the Millennium Summit.

His challenging report to the Summit, the superb organization and the opportunity it gave to our leaders to interact with each other and to develop a common vision for the twenty-first century all provided the most effective possible starting point for a new era of cooperation in addressing our common problems and achieving our common goals. It is now up to us, the membership, to take up these challenges and do justice to this vision. The Millennium Summit is not, of course, covered in the report before us, but my delegation does not want the occasion to pass without offering our congratulations and appreciation to the Secretary-General and his team.

In this millennium year, it is appropriate that we look back as well as forward. Nowhere is this more true than in the central task of conflict prevention and peacekeeping. The reports on the United Nations reaction to unfolding events in Srebrenica and in Rwanda revealed serious inadequacies and showed how these inadequacies contributed to the tragedies which took place. Experience in Sierra Leone has also been salutary.

We must be clear on one thing. This is our Organization, and if it has been shown to have been wanting in meeting its challenges, we all share the responsibility. If the Department of Peacekeeping Operations must maintain nearly 40,000 troops on 15 different peacekeeping missions with a totally inadequate Headquarters staff, if United Nations troops are placed in the field without the necessary training or equipment, if United Nations troops are forced to stand by powerlessly while atrocities are committed and if communications are inadequate, we are all responsible to some degree, and it is incumbent on all of us to engage in the search for solutions.

The United Nations cannot work miracles. We have seen over the past year that if protagonists are determined to resolve their differences through conflict then they will do so. But the reports on past tragedies show that the United Nations can do much more to prevent conflict and maintain peace if certain problems are addressed. The Secretary-General has not just given us a challenge; he has also given us a framework in which to address these problems. I am referring, of course, to the report (A/55/305) of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations chaired by Lakhdar Brahimi. My authorities are fully prepared to take up that challenge, and we intend to participate actively in the process of ensuring the successful implementation of the key recommendations of the Brahimi report.

Last year, the strengthening of early warning mechanisms was a particular theme of the Secretary-General's report. Since then, there have been some important developments. The Secretary-General, in his report, refers to the Prevention Team that has been established by the Department of Political Affairs, and to the strengthening of the capacity of other departments and agencies in this area, as well as to the new interdepartmental Framework for Coordination.

The Security Council too has paid close attention to conflict prevention over the past 12 months, with two open debates and the adoption of comprehensive presidential statements. United Nations cooperation with regional organizations has been stepped up. Efforts have been made to tap the potential of non-governmental actors. However, as the Secretary-General points out, United Nations efforts in that direction require leadership and resources, and therefore political will on the part of the membership.

The report makes clear how much of our efforts in that direction must still be directed at the continent of Africa. Conflict prevention, peacekeeping and post-conflict peace-building by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and subregional organizations, in cooperation with the United Nations, remain vital if current conflicts are to be brought to a close, further conflicts prevented and conditions created for peaceful development. I am convinced that the efforts of the United Nations, in cooperation with the OAU and subregional organizations and with individual mediators, will ultimately prove successful in Sierra Leone, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia and Angola, and that they will, over time, help Ethiopia and Eritrea to heal the wounds of war and to re-establish fraternal relations.

Outside Africa, the United Nations contribution was essential in the resolution of situations which had got out of hand, in particular Kosovo and East Timor. Delegations will understand if I welcome in particular the Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon in compliance with Security Council resolution 425 (1978). My country has been intensively involved with the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) for 22 years, an involvement which brought much sacrifice in human lives, but also much satisfaction, never more so than during the past few months. I would like to echo the Secretary-General's call for further efforts in the search for a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

The Secretary-General correctly observes that disarmament is a critical element of the United Nations strategy for peace and security, and also that, despite some progress, deep concern remains at the risk posed by nuclear weapons. One particularly positive event was the successful outcome of the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, to which the New Agenda coalition, of which Ireland was a founding member, made a critical contribution.

Looking to next year's United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in all its Aspects, the Secretary-General points out that these are the weapons that kill most people in most wars. All too often, these weapons are in the hands of children. It is time that the control of trade in these arms was made a matter of international treaty, and my authorities call on all concerned to cooperate with the Secretary-General in making a success of the Conference.

The Secretary-General affirms his conviction that thriving markets and human security go hand in hand, but he cautions that globalization must be made more inclusive and that its benefits must be spread more equitably. If poverty is to be reduced and ultimately eliminated – and that must remain our common goal – then adequate development financing must be available. The Secretary-General is right when he says that the benefits of globalization will bypass those who are unable to attract private capital unless official development assistance is maintained and increased.

That is why my Prime Minister made a very precise, transparent and quantifiable commitment at the Millennium Summit: Ireland will increase its level of official development assistance so as to reach the United Nations target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product by the year 2007. That is why Ireland has consistently increased its contribution to United Nations funds and programmes, with emphasis on their core activities. That is why Ireland has consistently contributed to the relief of debt and why it will continue to do so, even though it does not itself hold any debt, all of its assistance being in grant form.

But development must also be sustainable and, as the Secretary-General points out in the report before us, the challenges in achieving sustainability are complex and multifaceted. Development in our own generation must take place in a manner which ensures

that future generations will inherit an environment that will allow them to meet their needs. My authorities believe firmly in the need for a tool with which to measure the risks faced by countries in the face of environmental pressures. A solid and practicable environmental vulnerability index would be of great value to many Member States, and especially to the small island developing States, whose very existence is threatened by climate change. For that reason, Ireland is funding a technical study for the development of such an index, in line with the Secretary-General's call for innovative and practical solutions to the problems involved in the search for sustainable development. The work of the Commission on Sustainable Development is particularly crucial. It is essential that every effort be made over the next two years to ensure a successful outcome of the 10-year review of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development — the Rio Conference.

Finally, I would like to draw one further point from the Secretary-General's report. He says that Governments, international institutions, civil society and the private business sector all gain from cooperation, because each achieves through cooperation what none could achieve alone. During this past year, up to and including the Millennium Summit, we have seen very significant progress in defining the common goals that we want to achieve. I am confident that, working together in the United Nations, we will succeed in reconciling our individual interests in the pursuit of these common goals.

Mr. Valdivieso (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like at the outset to thank the Secretary-General for preparing and presenting his report on the work of the Organization, contained in document A/55/1. At the fifty-fourth session, my delegation expressed its positions and participated in the debate and consideration of many of the issues addressed in that report. We shall be taking the same approach during the fifty-fifth session, and will be stating our Government's positions and concerns throughout the year.

The Millennium Summit celebrations are behind us and we now need to begin, during our Millennium Assembly, to implement the Millennium Declaration proposals. We are certain that in our deliberations we will give them our full consideration, always avoiding giving priority to some over others of equal or more importance, particularly to developing countries.

I wish to share some preliminary thoughts on document A/55/1. We are aware of the considerable challenges in the area of peace and security. In paragraph 64, in particular, the need to resolve the conflict prevailing in my country is recognized. The Government of Colombia continues to be committed to seeking a political solution to a conflict that has lasted for more than 40 years, and requests the solidarity and persistence of the international community to achieve it. We will continue to work very closely with the Secretary-General's Special Adviser on International Assistance to Colombia, being convinced that progress towards attaining peace will be reflected in substantial improvements in the human rights situation.

With regard to the maintenance and consideration of peace, the basis of our discussions will be the Brahimi report (A/55/305) on peace operations. The report has been positively received by Member States, and there is general agreement on the need to make prompt decisions on its proposals, which will affect the future of the United Nations. However, we must bear in mind, first, that the General Assembly is the only organ that can give those decisions the international legitimacy needed to ensure their effectiveness; secondly, that it will be inconvenient to act on the basis of rigid timetables that subject these decisions to unnecessary time pressures; and, thirdly, that the Brahimi report is one of many documents containing recommendations, and therefore should be evaluated with the same consideration as other reports, such as that prepared by the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (A/51/130).

The fulfilment of humanitarian commitments mentioned in the Secretary-General's report must be through a cautious balance that takes into account the limitations of the United Nations system, the need to respect the sovereignty of all States and the innumerable demands made by a humanitarian crisis. It is essential that we establish in all cases systems for cooperation and communication with national Governments willing to participate in preventing and overcoming humanitarian crises.

Development issues are of particular concern to Colombia. There is a proliferation of diagnoses of the situation in the South, such as those presented in the Secretary-General's report and in other reports submitted throughout the year. However, they lack recommendations on the collective and individual action necessary to ensure the fulfilment of the

objectives in the Millennium Declaration. This matter merits more careful and balanced consideration adequately taking into account the responsibilities of the North and the South.

I conclude with a reflection on the beneficiaries of the role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century. Our consideration of the future of the United Nations must begin with an evaluation of the past within the international system. Which countries have been the great beneficiaries of the past? To what extent have the developing countries been the great losers of the past? Clearly, we developing countries have received important benefits from the existence of the United Nations. However, it is also clear that they have not been enough. We then ask ourselves: How can we ensure that the beneficiaries of the future include the peoples of the developing world? Many of the concerns and the challenges mentioned by the Secretary-General in his report directly involve the South — our countries. We are interested in the debate; we will participate in it; and we hope to keep alive the exchange begun in recent months so that the solutions also involve our countries.

Mr. Abulhasan (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, my delegation wishes to express its great appreciation for the excellent and dedicated efforts of the Secretary-General in managing and administering the work of our Organization, as it has gone through difficult circumstances at the end of the last century, a century that witnessed many international problems. We congratulate him on the success of the Millennium Summit and its results, hoping that all States will respect their commitments in order to ensure the success and efficiency of our Organization in the new century.

Our delegation has studied the content of the Secretary-General's report submitted to us today. The reader of the report comes away with two realities. One is that we as Governments and peoples find the role of the United Nations indispensable in maintaining international peace and security and in facing the challenges connected to those issues. Secondly, the tasks of the United Nations have become extremely complex and all-inclusive, to the extent that it has become very difficult to separate issues of security and development and issues of political stability and economic prosperity.

Our delegation agrees with practically everything in the report, but we wish to make the following comments.

First, the issues connected with the establishment of international peace and security are the most pivotal tasks of the United Nations. We fully agree that those issues should be given prominence in the annual reports submitted by the Secretary-General, because they are closely connected to the economic and social problems we face today.

Secondly, the concept of collective security and the idea of conflict prevention should include all the international problems and issues we face, because, in the final analysis, they will affect the security of humanity as a whole, and that necessitates the consensus of all parties and respect for the sovereignty of all States.

Thirdly, Kuwait welcomes the explanation given by the Secretary-General concerning progress in peacekeeping operations. We also welcome the report of Ambassador Lakhdar Brahimi (A/55/305), concerning his assessment of peace operations and the need to promote them as a major tool for maintaining international peace and security. We call upon the General Assembly to deal with his Panel's recommendations very seriously. Kuwait fully understands the importance of peacekeeping operations, since the United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observer Mission (UNIKOM) plays an important role in maintaining peace and stability on our international border with Iraq, a fact that led us to voluntarily contribute two thirds of the budget of this force.

Fourthly, Kuwait believes that the problems of poverty and disease, which are claiming so many victims, have been around for a long time and are not, as is being said today, the result of globalization. Successfully confronting the dangers of poverty and disease calls for efficient action, which should begin with initiatives at the State level, which could then be combined with those of other States to become a collective and organized action.

Fifthly, Kuwait fully agrees with the Secretary-General's position on sanctions, as expressed in his report on the work of the Organization and the report to the Millennium Summit. We, like others, express deep sympathy for the peoples who suffer as a result of sanctions. At the same time, however, our sympathy should not go out to regimes that control the destiny of

people under sanctions or that profit from sanctions. Such regimes have been characterized as tyrannical and dictatorial in both reports of the Secretary-General. Sanctions should act precisely against those regimes to force them to reform their policies. The international community's sympathy should go out to suffering people, not to their rulers.

Sixthly, our delegation shares the concern expressed by the Secretary-General in his report on the work of the Organization over the continued non-compliance by the Iraqi Government with the relevant Security Council resolutions and specifically over its rejection of resolution 1284 (1999). In connection with paragraphs 54 and 55 of the Secretary-General's report, we also share the concern over that Government's refusal to cooperate with the high-level coordinator to solve the problem of Kuwaiti prisoners of war and Kuwaiti property. We endorse those two paragraphs as they reflect the neutrality and objectivity of Secretary-General Kofi Annan. Those qualities have always led us to trust him when dealing with international problems of common interest.

It is also important to draw the attention of Member States to the fact that showing concern for people's suffering by expressing sympathy requires credibility so that such concern covers the sufferings of other peoples who may simultaneously be the cause and victims of suffering. Showing concern for the suffering of one people but not for another exposes political aims that have nothing to do with internationally accepted humanitarian principles, which are intrinsic to every human being.

It is for that reason that Kuwait continues to appeal to Member States to call directly on the Iraqi Government to solve the problem of Kuwaiti and third-party prisoners of war, and to end the suffering of their families who have been enduring it for over 10 years. We reaffirm the fact that solving these problems requires political determination on the part of Iraq to stop relying on political pretexts that only serve to perpetuate the suffering of innocent people. Every regional organization — namely, the Gulf Cooperation Council, the League of Arab States, the Non-Aligned Movement and the Organization of the Islamic Conference — has called on Iraq to solve this humanitarian problem. We hope that the Iraqi Government will respond to those appeals.

In conclusion, we in Kuwait would like to reaffirm our support for the efforts of the Secretary-General as the leader of the Organization. We firmly believe that without the support and cooperation of Member States, the United Nations will not succeed in meeting the challenges of the new century. We stress the need to concentrate on economic and social challenges. A careful reading of the Secretary-General's report to the Millennium Summit and an examination of the statistics on the victims of poverty, AIDS and drug abuse indicate that these matters cry out for sincere policies and full cooperation, as well as a rejection of conflict and individual interests. Failing to do so will deprive our generation and future generations of any enjoyment of the life granted to us by God the Almighty. That would be sheer selfishness.

Mr. Satoh (Japan): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Millennium Assembly. My delegation is prepared to cooperate with you in the course of this important session.

The Millennium Summit was a great success. The Millennium Declaration, which was adopted by a consensus among all the leaders of the world participating at the Summit, has set forth clear guidelines for the role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century. Of course, holding the Summit and adopting the Declaration are not ends in themselves but, rather, mark a new starting point. It is now the responsibility of all Member States to work for the realization of the goals set forth in that historic document.

The report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization provides a useful guide for our efforts in that regard. I would like to express our deep appreciation to the Secretary-General for producing that valuable report. Today, I would like to touch upon three issues.

First of all, I would like to stress anew the importance of strengthening the United Nations, and the Security Council in particular. As Japan's Prime Minister, Yoshiro Mori, and its Foreign Minister, Yohei Kono, made clear in their respective statements to the Summit and in the general debate, the Security Council must be reformed so that it reflects the realities of today's international community. In this context, it is indeed encouraging to note that during the course of those meetings, more than 150 countries stressed the

urgent need for Security Council reform. Moreover, it is our understanding that as many as 70 countries specifically underlined the need to expand both the permanent and non-permanent categories of membership.

The Secretary-General was right when he stressed in his concluding remarks to world leaders at the Summit that

> "Almost everyone one of you has called for a comprehensive reform of the Security Council. That surely must give new impetus to the search for consensus on this thorny but unavoidable issue." *(A/55/PV.8)*

We must now redouble our efforts in order to achieve Security Council reform, building upon the momentum generated by our leaders at that historic Summit.

As we all know, financial reform is also a task which requires our special efforts at this session. In order to place this valuable Organization on a sound and firm financial basis, it is essential to make the scale of assessments for the regular budget more equitable. And, given that requirements for peacekeeping operations are expected to increase, it is also important to attain more balanced budget sharing in the financing of peacekeeping operations. It is, I believe, the responsibility of all Member States to address this issue with a sense of urgency.

The Japanese Government welcomes the report (A/55/305) of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations, and I applaud the efforts of Ambassador Lakhdar Brahimi and the other members of the Panel who produced this important document, which contains many useful suggestions.

We are in full agreement with the Secretary-General's assertion on 12 September that we should consider expeditiously the recommendations of the Panel. Japan, for its part, places particular importance on strengthening the functions of the United Nations Secretariat with respect to making its operations more effective. In this connection, we look forward to the early presentation by the Secretary-General of an implementation plan. We will participate in the deliberations on implementation in a forward-looking manner.

Finally, I would like to underscore anew the importance of human security, or a human-centred approach, in addressing the issues which the international community is now facing. As Prime Minister Mori stressed at the Summit, it is essential that we give priority to the protection of life and dignity of people when we tackle the problems before us, which include poverty, environmental degradation, conflicts, human rights violations, refugees and displaced persons, AIDS and other infectious diseases.

In this context, I strongly endorse the report of the Secretary-General, which stressed the importance of human security in various contexts. Recognizing that the United Nations should play a more active role in promoting a human-centred approach to various problems, Japan has to date contributed more than $80 million to the Human Security Fund, whose creation was proposed by the late Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi. I am pleased to remind the Assembly that Prime Minister Mori announced at the Millennium Summit that the Japanese Government would make a further contribution of approximately $100 million to this Fund. We sincerely hope that the Fund will add to the willingness and capacity of the international community to enhance human security as it addresses a broad range of issues in the coming years.

Mr. Moushoutas (Cyprus): The Millennium Summit and the general debate which has just concluded gave pre-eminence as never before to man's quest for a more equitable distribution of wealth. The halls of this Assembly are echoing the concern and anger of the least developed countries, the small island States and the developing States in general, about the widening gap between rich and poor, the negative impact of globalization, the unsustainable debt burden, the inexcusable and unacceptable loss of life from curable diseases, such as malaria, while HIV/AIDS, which plagues especially the African States, is spreading with frightening speed in other parts of the world.

It was correctly stated that we live in a world of abundance but with extreme poverty right on our doorsteps. The urgent need for action has never been highlighted as it was during the Millennium Summit, and at the highest representative level. The Declaration of this historic Summit, setting specific goals for the eradication of curable diseases and for combating extreme poverty, are realistic. What is needed is determination for action to make the Summit's promise a reality, as the Secretary-General stated.

We agree with the assessment that, in the fight against poverty and the negative effects of globalization, favourable trade terms, foreign investment and increased official development assistance are of paramount importance. What is more, we believe that international institutions could assist by being more receptive to the special problems and special needs of a number of developing States.

Extreme poverty and poverty in general, beyond the suffering they cause, are a source of the deterioration of the environment; they breed crime and are the root causes of conflicts. "Hungry people", said one speaker, "wake up angry people". We must try to implement the 1990s agenda commitment on development, especially now, after the reinforcement of those commitments by the Millennium Summit Declaration.

The Secretary-General's report concedes that many States have serious and legitimate concerns about intervention, and goes on to pose the question:

> "if humanitarian intervention is, indeed, an unacceptable assault on sovereignty, how should we respond to ... gross and systematic violations of human rights ... ?" *(A/55/1, para. 37)*

We are among the many that share the concerns to which the Secretary-General referred.

We hold that the Charter of the United Nations, signed by 189 sovereign Member States, bestowed on the Security Council primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security and granted to it the authority to employ coercive measures, including the use of force, when threats or breaches of peace and security occur. Except in cases of self-defence, covered in Article 51 of the Charter, any use of armed force by any State for the solution of international problems is absolutely and unambiguously prohibited.

The Security Council remains the sole source of the legitimate use of armed force when dealing with breaches of peace and, of course, when systematic and gross violations of human rights are involved.

We cannot supersede or substitute these Charter provisions, for there is no alternative to the Security Council's legality in the use of armed force. What is more, there is no other international instrument which enjoys, as the Charter does, the unanimous support of mankind. Despite its more than five decades of existence, the Charter is as relevant as ever and indispensable — even more so today. What is needed is strict adherence to its provisions by all.

If we accept intervention outside the United Nations framework, it may also encourage militant separatists to create conditions of bloodshed that are conducive to intervention. Even where the Security Council fails to agree to the use of armed force, there are other remedies which the Council may agree to employ. The founding fathers, in Article 41 of the Charter, gave us a list of coercive measures not involving the use of armed force that the Council may adopt. The coming into full operation of the International Criminal Court is an added restraint to human rights violations.

If the measures provided for in Article 41 prove inadequate, then the problem may be brought for deliberation before the General Assembly, which is the most representative main organ of the United Nations. We must not forget also that States have the primary responsibility for safeguarding the human rights of their people.

Respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States and non-interference in their internal affairs cannot be and must not be interpreted as an impediment to safeguarding human rights or justifying inaction when systematic and gross violations of human rights occur. To the contrary, when the action to be taken enjoys the legality of a United Nations mandate, the chances are that it will meet its goals in redressing grave violations of human rights.

The use of armed force, motivated by good intentions but in violation of provisions of the Charter regarding respect for the sovereignty of States, is no solution. It is a cause of more problems to come. If we allow well-intentioned interventions outside the United Nations framework, we will be opening a Pandora's box, for, as we said before, there will always be leaders who, under the pretext of the humanitarian protection of the rights of peoples, minorities or ethnic communities, will use aggression for expansionist reasons. Paragraph 4 of Article 2 of the Charter prohibits such use of force.

The subject of humanitarian intervention is both crucial and challenging and needs thorough discussion within and outside the United Nations. We therefore welcome the Canadian initiative on the subject.

As to other issues raised in the report, cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations and civil society should be further strengthened, while the cooperation of the United Nations with the private sector, a potent partner, could reap many benefits for mankind, especially in the domain of the environment, when well monitored and Charter-oriented.

As to reforms, we believe that an enlarged Security Council reflecting the realities of today's world would also better serve the interests of peace and security. It is time to turn this widely shared position into practice.

On the question of sanctions, we believe that there is room for improvement and share the Secretary-General's view that the administration of sanctions must be geared to minimizing their negative effects on civilian populations and neighbouring States.

In conclusion, we would like to express appreciation to the Secretary-General for his report in document A/55/1 and for the ideas, suggestions and recommendations he has provided us as food for thought. We fully support the advice of the Secretary-General on the need to implement the goals of the Declaration of the Millennium Summit. We especially value his solemn warning never to leave the United Nations without resources to protect those who have placed their trust in it.

Mr. Pradhan (Bhutan): My delegation would like to add its voice to those commending the Secretary-General on his report on the work of our Organization. With this document and his earlier report to the Millennium Summit, we have a comprehensive view of the ongoing activities of the United Nations and the possible actions that Members could initiate towards implementing the goals of the Charter. In the interest of brevity, my delegation would like to comment on only a few of the issues in the report.

The Secretary-General has not only envisioned the United Nations as a forum in which national Governments may work together, but over the years has made impressive inroads in involving private corporations, civil society and labour organizations in playing a role in promoting the goals of the United Nations Charter. His Global Compact initiative has been an important step in this direction. My delegation commends the Secretary-General and we ask him to continue his laudable work. It is now quite clear that such important sections of international society, which have so much influence on the lives of people across the globe, can be of great help in supporting our work here in this universal body.

Peacekeeping and peace-building are obviously vital and, as can be seen from the Secretary-General's report, these activities are expanding in scope. My delegation appreciates the many achievements of our Organization. We are also aware that the tasks are sometimes difficult and that failures loom large. Though peacekeeping and peace-building are of great importance and necessary to the maintenance of international peace and security, there is a need to take an objective look into the necessary and not-so-necessary activities with a view to keeping operational costs minimal and affordable. In this context, the Brahimi report is welcome and needs to be looked into and given due consideration.

My delegation was heartened to see the Secretary-General touching upon issues related to cooperation for development in his report. The great need of the hour, in order to fulfil the decisions taken by the international community, is to reverse the declining trend in disbursements of official development assistance. The least developed countries have been calling for the fulfilment of the target 0.15 per cent of gross national product for official development assistance from the target 0.7 gross national product agreed upon for all developing countries. We request the Secretary-General to continue to impress upon the developed countries the need to recommit themselves to this important goal and to fulfil the target in the interest of tackling poverty and to further international cooperation in development.

As the Secretary-General has emphasized, social and economic development has to be accompanied by good governance and be people-centred. With the expanding world population, which is expected to rise to 10 billion by 2030, we are deeply concerned by the pressures of population movements. This phenomenon could undermine the very foundations of nations and disrupt the hard-earned successes of socio-economic development achieved over decades. National Governments must not only take active and effective steps to control population growth, but also provide good governance and create the social and economic conditions to look after the welfare of their peoples. Otherwise, the peace and security of regions can be

seriously undermined. This is an aspect that needs to be given more emphasis by Members and by the international community.

The Secretary-General has mentioned that he has received considerable support for the proposals made in his report to the Millennium Summit. My delegation sees this especially in the case of cooperation in economic development, and we are heartened to know of this widespread acceptance of the views put forward in his report. But verbal support is one thing and actual action another. The Secretary-General has rightly pointed this out and has called on Member States to go beyond verbal statements and, instead, begin to take concrete action. My delegation supports this call of the Secretary-General.

Mr. Schumacher (Germany): On behalf of my Government, I would like to express my appreciation and respect for the work the United Nations has done during the last 12 months — a year in which another 17 people have lost their lives in the line of United Nations duty in different international theatres, many of them in acts of violence with the culprits never having been brought to justice. This alone is a sombre reminder that the international community is still far from reaching its ambitious goals of peaceful and prosperous cooperation for the good of mankind.

The Millennium Summit, its final Declaration and the ensuing general debate have again provided a sharp analysis of the world's inequities and injustices, and many political declarations of intent on how to overcome them. True and immediate action to remedy these problems is still desperately needed. The Secretary-General's comprehensive and valuable report shows the enormous efforts the United Nations has made to meet the manifold challenges. Let us join the Secretariat in highlighting concrete actions that we, the Member States, are undertaking to support and advance the same endeavour.

I will thus focus on two points only. The first is our — that is, Germany's — contribution to the expeditious implementation of the Brahimi report, or at least parts thereof. The second is the quest for a more inclusive United Nations, "towards global partnerships".

Ambassador Brahimi's report reflects that there can be no sustainable development without lasting peace and security. The report highlighted two essential needs of today's peacekeeping: the need for better training and the need for quicker response time. New, multifunctional peacekeeping operations require an increasing number of qualified police and civilian experts. These experts can range from civilian police officers and election monitors to legal and administrative experts or medical and demining teams. Preparation for these complex deployments must begin in good time, before the need for a United Nations peacekeeping operation emerges and the mandate is formulated. Quick response time is the key word.

It is against this background that in July 1999 the German Foreign Office established a German international training centre for civil personnel to be deployed in international peacekeeping missions. One of its aims is to create a personnel reserve consisting of trained experts suited for the most diverse tasks and not limited to one single type of deployment. This is our immediate contribution towards the creation of a pool of qualified personnel who, as recommended by the Brahimi Panel, can be made available, upon request, to the United Nations — or to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe — anywhere in the world, quickly and in keeping with the specific needs of any given mission. A special civilian personnel database has already been established to create a quasi-standby facility, in order to support international missions in the crucial start-up phase, when qualified personnel are most urgently needed.

The courses are now open to international participants and non-governmental organizations. We plan to offer training opportunities to those countries that do not have their own training facilities for civilian personnel. For nationals from countries that would find it difficult to bear the costs of participation, we intend to arrange for specific grants. Four hundred people will have been trained by the end of the year 2000. Cooperation with other international training centres to create uniform training standards will be a high priority on our agenda.

Let me now turn to the second major point, our quest for a more inclusive United Nations, and let me quote part of paragraph 5 of the historic Millennium Declaration, contained in resolution 55/2:

> "We believe that the central challenge we face today is to ensure that globalization becomes a positive force for all the world's people. For while globalization offers great opportunities, at present its benefits are very unevenly shared,

> while its costs are unevenly distributed. Thus, only through broad and sustained efforts to create a shared future, based upon our common humanity in all its diversity, can globalization be made fully inclusive and equitable."

Foreign Minister Fischer and many of his colleagues highlighted this point in the recent general debate.

I would like to draw delegations' attention to the new item, "Towards global partnerships", which Germany has introduced into the agenda of this session of the General Assembly. It is well known that globalization and big global challenges in many areas have led to the emergence and increasing importance of new global players, especially from civil society and, in particular, from transnational business. The Secretary-General rightly attaches importance to an appropriate involvement of these new players in the United Nations work.

Together with a number of other countries, Germany is of the opinion that it is up to the Member States to discuss these issues in a constructive spirit, with the aim of reaching a focused, coherent and integrated approach, including everyone and leaving no regional grouping aside. In this spirit, we are already conducting consultations with a number of interested States from all regions, in order to jointly introduce a draft resolution on this topic at this session of the General Assembly. We will be working to achieve the widest possible consensus on this issue, and we are very grateful that the reactions received so far have been quite encouraging.

As the Secretary-General has asked us to roll up our sleeves and start putting into action the bold pledges that our heads of State and Government made during the Millennium Summit, we made an attempt to follow his advice. I would be grateful if Member States made use of the German training centre for international peacekeeping missions and helped us to find a fruitful consensus on our draft resolution, "Towards global partnerships".

Mr. Ling (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): Since this is my first statement to the plenary of the General Assembly in my capacity as Permanent Representative of the Republic of Belarus, allow me at the outset to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as President of the fifty-fifth session of this important body of the United Nations and to wish you every success in discharging your mission.

The discussions at the current session of the General Assembly on such an important matter as the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/55/1) are focused on issues of unique importance. The intensive and fundamental analyses of the major trends in the development of today's world made by heads of State and Government during the Millennium Summit and further addressed during the general debate provide us with a particular responsibility in following today's discussion.

The Republic of Belarus commends the United Nations Secretary-General Mr. Kofi Annan for the high professionalism in his leadership of the United Nations during the past year. All of us have been witnesses to truly outstanding work aimed at strengthening the United Nations and defining the principal priorities for its future development. The Secretary-General's report is an important part of this work.

In the past year, as the Secretary-General rightly observed in his report, the international community was still not close enough to meeting its major goals as defined by the preamble to the United Nations Charter. Over this past year the United Nations has not succeeded in saving humankind from the scourge of war and in establishing a harmony between human rights, social progress and better living standards with greater freedoms for all subjects of international law. We welcome the fact that the United Nations has not remained a passive bystander to such a state of affairs. The initiatives of the Secretary-General to launch an independent study on Srebrenica and Rwanda, as well as the idea of the creation of a high-level panel to make recommendations aimed at increasing the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations, chaired by Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi, have served as vivid examples of this. The speediest possible analysis of the report of this group and a definition of the mechanisms for the implementation of its recommendations are vitally important to us from the point of view of enhancing the effectiveness of the process of the United Nations peacekeeping functions.

The people of our countries need peace. In the last century Belarus made an important contribution to this process in demonstrating full compliance with the obligations of the United Nations by relinquishing the possession of nuclear arms. The President and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belarus recently reaffirmed the intention of Belarus to continue its contributions to the process of disarmament. During

the course of the present session the Republic of Belarus has already deposited documents for the ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and Protocol IV — on blinding laser weapons — to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects. Belarus will continue to defend the noble initiative of the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central and Eastern Europe.

The Government of Belarus has carefully studied the section of the report dealing with sanctions. We support the conclusion made by the Secretary-General in his report that these coercive measures do not always yield identical results and that in recent years the effectiveness of these measures has been increasingly questionable. Moreover, in this context third countries often are the parties who suffer. Belarus is no exception in this regard. Therefore, we support the proposal made during the general debate by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, Mr. Jan Kavan, concerning the creation within the framework of the United Nations of a special group similar to Mr. Brahimi's panel to make a comprehensive and impartial analysis of the whole range of questions related to sanctions. Belarus is ready to actively participate in the work of this group at all its stages.

In analysing the section of the report, "Meeting humanitarian commitments" (A/55/1, para. 109-153), the delegation of the Republic of Belarus would like to draw the Assembly's attention to the issue of Chernobyl. Today, on the eve of the fifteenth anniversary of the disaster, we still believe that this problem is an anguish that not only Belarus continues to suffer from. Both the President and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of my country have praised the United Nations role in mitigating the consequences of this catastrophe. We sincerely hope that the United Nations will further assist in the development of new forms of cooperation with Belarus on this matter.

The Millennium Summit and the Millennium Declaration adopted by the heads of State and Government put forward several important tasks before the United Nations. Part of the work on renewing the United Nations began last year. That is reaffirmed by the report of the Secretary-General that we are considering today. But the major part of the work still lies ahead of us. Belarus is ready to face new challenges and actively implement the objectives facing the United Nations.

Mr. Yel'chenko (Ukraine): The symbolic character of the year 2000 and the convening of the historic Millennium Summit of the United Nations will inevitably influence the consideration of every item on the agenda of the current session of the General Assembly. This is especially true with regard to the consideration of the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/55/1). I would like to join previous speakers in thanking the Secretary-General for this important document containing concise and thoughtful coverage of the United Nations' activities over the past year.

My delegation believes that a forward-looking approach towards assessing the United Nations' achievements and failures during the past twelve months would correspond in the best way to the spirit of the Millennium Assembly. In the course of the just concluded general debate we heard repeated calls for action to implement the commitments made at the Millennium Summit. Therefore, an action-oriented approach is really essential for making the Summit's promise a reality.

I will focus my comments on the portion of the report covering the Organization's activities related to the maintenance of international peace and security. Ukraine subscribes entirely to the words with which the Secretary-General opens this part of the report.

> "Sustainable peace and security for all countries and peoples remains a central objective of the United Nations at the dawn of the twenty-first century, as it was when the Organization was founded over half a century ago." *(A/55/1, para. 29)*

The lessons of the last decade in the maintenance of peace and security have impressively proved the indispensability of the United Nations, but they have also revealed its serious limitations and shortcomings. Therefore, it is not accidentally that the task of redressing those limitations and shortcomings has come to the forefront of the discussion as the Organization enters the new century. Let me address the major areas where the changes are indeed imperative.

Ukraine joins the Secretary-General in welcoming the growing attention of Member States

towards conflict prevention. For the last decade, my country has consistently advocated the need to strengthen this dimension of United Nations activities. We agree it is very important to maintain the existing broad commitment to improving the capacity of the United Nations for effective preventive action.

In this connection, I would like to reiterate the proposal put forward by the President of Ukraine Leonid Kuchma to develop a comprehensive conflict prevention strategy for the United Nations. Addressing the meetings at the highest level of two principal organs of the United Nations — the Millennium Summit and the Security Council Summit — the President of Ukraine made a number of suggestions as to what could become concrete elements of such a strategy. In particular, one of its key components could be the establishment of United Nations regional centres for conflict prevention. Another integral element could be conflict prevention operations, which should gain prominence as a qualitatively new model of peacekeeping activities.

Recognition of the importance of conflict prevention should also find its manifestation in everyday activities of the Security Council. For example, the Secretary-General informs us in his report of the establishment of a Prevention Team within the Department of Political Affairs, which meets regularly to identify conflict situations that may offer potential for preventive action (A/55/1, para. 42). We believe it would be truly beneficial to initiate the practice of the Security Council receiving regular briefings by the Prevention Team.

The report of the Secretary-General takes note of a significant increase in peacekeeping operations over the past 12 months. That increase coincided with the beginning of Ukraine's membership of the Security Council. In that regard, I am proud to state from this rostrum that, since Ukraine became a member of that organ, there has been not a single newly established or substantially expanded peacekeeping operation — from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, to Sierra Leone, to southern Lebanon, to Kosovo, to East Timor, to Ethiopia and Eritrea — to which my country has not contributed trained and properly equipped personnel. Ukraine's commitment to peacekeeping operations explains our determination to strengthen that key instrument available to the United Nations in discharging its responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. A powerful impetus in that endeavour was provided by the Security Council's summit meeting, which resulted in a number of very important undertakings, including a pledge to adopt clearly defined, credible and achievable mandates. Ukraine will pay special attention to practical implementation of another Security Council summit commitment: to strengthen consultations between that organ and troop-contributing countries.

It is also very important to give urgent consideration to the pertinent recommendations of the report (A/55/305) of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations. As we have been informed, the Secretary-General has already committed himself to implementing the changes for which he is responsible. This morning the Security Council started to discuss the recommendations that fall within its area of responsibility. The General Assembly too should respond to the Secretary-General's appeal to act expeditiously on the Panel's recommendations. In that connection, Ukraine believes that the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations represents the best and most appropriate forum in which to consider the report, and calls on its Bureau to convene a special session to start the discussion, with a view to making prompt recommendations to the General Assembly. We also think it is important to initiate a mechanism of regular consultations among the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Secretariat on the implementation of the Panel's recommendations.

The last issue I would like to take up relates to economic sanctions imposed by the Security Council with a view to maintaining or restoring peace and security. Ukraine could not agree more with the very precise conclusions contained in the Secretary-General's report regarding both the efficacy and the negative side effects of sanctions. In that respect, I would like to reiterate Ukraine's strong view that it is absolutely necessary to develop a clear and coherent methodology for the imposition and lifting of sanctions that takes into consideration the concerns of civilian populations and the interests of third countries. We believe it is important to maintain the recent Security Council practice of defining time limits for sanctions at the time of their imposition. It is of primary importance to develop objective criteria and mechanisms for assessing the effectiveness of sanctions and their impact, including on the target State. We also support the immediate lifting of sanctions when there are sufficient grounds to believe that they have served their

purpose. Ukraine is determined to pursue efforts aimed at what the Secretary-General defines as

> "the evolution of sanctions into a more potent instrument of deterrence and conflict prevention". (*A/55/1, para. 101*)

Let me conclude by stressing Ukraine's willingness to maintain its resolve to contribute actively to the common endeavour aimed at strengthening the United Nations.

Mr. Alemán (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I wish to begin by thanking the Secretary-General for his annual report on the work of the Organization (A/55/1), which offers quite a comprehensive overview of the activities that have been carried out, and of the obstacles and challenges that will be facing the United Nations in the years to come. Basically, the Organization has been and continues to be a propitious forum for the search for fair and lasting solutions in the areas of gravest concern to the international community: peace and security; meeting humanitarian commitments; development cooperation; the international legal order; and human rights.

As the report observes, the main task of the United Nations is the maintenance of international peace and security. I completely agree that the nature and scope of the causes of conflict have changed. During the cold war, ideological confrontation and violations of borders were the gravest factors destabilizing peace, but today, most conflicts are internal conflicts in which violations of the most fundamental human rights of entire populations constitute the principal threat to world security.

My delegation would like to highlight and clearly define two considerations that will guide its conduct in this sphere. First, we consider that human rights issues do not fall exclusively within the domestic jurisdiction of States: they are governed also by the Charter, which is an international treaty whose obligations are binding on the parties to it. Secondly, we believe that the political shortcomings and historical legacies that are reflected in the organs responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security can never legitimize international punitive action, however much it may be based on lofty humanitarian principles. Collective action requiring the use of force must conform to the provisions of Chapter VII of the San Francisco Charter; any action that ignores those provisions will damage both the credibility of the Organization and the institutional stability of these mechanisms.

Here I would like to commend the praiseworthy efforts of the high-level Panel on United Nations Peace Operations, which are reflected in the so-called Brahimi report (A/55/305). Its content and, especially, its recommendations deserve level-headed, realistic analysis by the Organization, so that the United Nations can have access to a strengthened and renewed mechanism with which to carry out effectively the increasingly complex tasks facing it in this area. This, of course, must be without prejudice to the universally endorsed principles that govern its activities.

Peace and security and their polar opposites, violence and instability, are concepts that cannot be addressed in isolation from the economic and social well-being of peoples. Development, indeed, is the key task facing nations as they strive for advancement. Its fundamental objective is to offer new options for individual well-being, and attaining it requires a firm foundation for human development and the consolidation of democracy. Those aspirations should be common to all our efforts, but they are reality only for the few: for the rest, they remain in the realm of theory, of what ought to be. In their national efforts to achieve higher levels of economic and social progress, developing countries face many constraints. These problems have persisted for decades, and are compounded by the effects of a globalization that is focused more on free markets, competition and new communications technologies than on ensuring that the opportunities are disseminated worldwide, among all countries and among all sectors of the population.

In this context, the Secretary-General's report contains ideas and initiatives that invite reflection and decisive action by the international community. I agree with the Secretary-General that the most important development goal of the United Nations must continue to be the elimination of poverty. To that end, it is necessary to adopt appropriate mechanisms so that globalization will generate benefits for all countries, regardless of their degree of development. It is time to propose principles and guidelines to direct the globalization process, which is still inchoate.

The concept of shared responsibility in managing international relations is now a principle of international law, reflected in the Millennium Summit mandate, which clearly defines the central role of the

United Nations in this regard. The new millennium must bear witness to the historic responsibility of all Member States to strengthen multilateral mechanisms in order to create a more equitable international scenario and thereby one that is more peaceful and secure.

In this context, the Organization's effort to create norms to regulate international relations in all areas of human activity is commendable. This contribution by the United Nations must strengthen the complex process of interdependency that is emerging from the new international order and that requires faithful respect and observance in order to convert theory into a practical attitude.

The reflections in the Secretary-General's report lead us to maintain that the United Nations, with new and greater tasks, requires today, more than ever, the financial support of Member States to achieve the aspirations of international peace and development. The political support that our heads of State offered our Organization at the recent Millennium Summit must be reflected in adequate financial support. It must be provided according to each State's real capacity to pay, since development levels vary so much that poorer countries should not assume additional responsibilities that further encumber their economic and social development. Only through a system that recognizes these differences and provides predictability will we ensure vital financial resources and guarantee the principle of fairly sharing the burden.

Mr. Šimonović (Croatia): My delegation wishes to express its gratitude for a comprehensive report covering the field of the broad activities of the Organization during the past year. The present agenda item allows us to reflect in a more specific way upon the work of the Organization and the every day challenges that have confronted it during this symbolic year.

As stated in the report, no issue commands more of our attention and resources than the achievement of peace and security. Indeed, the demands placed on the United Nations in the fields of conflict prevention, peacekeeping, peace-building and the various follow-on operations will continue to constitute the core activities of the Organization. At the same time, it is the timeliness and the overall quality of the Organization's responses to such demands that define its utility to its broad constituencies.

Member States should heed the Secretary-General's recognition that

> "collective security can no longer be narrowly defined as the absence of armed conflict, be it between or within States." (*A/55/1, para. 31*)

The report rightly calls for innovative approaches to managing complex peace operations, including those that will not shy away from crossing over institutional and administrative turf in the search for comprehensive solutions. In this connection, Croatia agrees with the view of the Secretary-General that the world has a responsibility to act when universally accepted basic human rights are being violated on a massive scale.

The lessons of Srebrenica, Rwanda, and most recently Sierra Leone, among others, have once more demonstrated the importance of clear, well-managed and achievable Security Council mandates. But even the best mandate remains a dead letter unless it is supported by political will and the necessary means for its implementation.

We believe that the Croatian experience of progress from a host country to a contributor of peacekeepers can be useful for the Organization. In this regard, we look forward to the conclusion during this session of the mandate of the small United Nations Mission of Observers in Prevlaka (UNMOP) in Croatia and Croatia's increased participation in peacekeeping operations elsewhere.

Clearly, peace operations are ripe for a comprehensive and substantial overhaul. In this regard, the Croatian Minister for Foreign Affairs, in his statement in the General Assembly on 13 September, welcomed the Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (A/55/305). Croatia supports the reform process in all its aspects, including the conceptualization and adoption of Security Council mandates, integrated mission planning and support, rapid deployment and mission duration timelines, as well as the restructuring of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

The United Nations continues to operate in a dynamic international environment. Human security is challenged not only by conflict, but also by emergencies occasioned by nature. Irrespective of the cause, global interconnectedness dictates that the impact of such disruptions on people, on their economic well-being and the environment, have a

broad effect. Over the past year the United Nations has been increasingly called upon to coordinate humanitarian action through an inter-agency approach. The achievements of the Organization in this field, from Kosovo and East Timor to Venezuela and Mozambique, have been admirable.

Croatia is encouraged by the undertakings of the nuclear-weapon States made during the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Nevertheless, progress in overall disarmament remains sporadic. Additionally, the role of the United Nations in demining is important for many countries that continue to suffer from this blight well after many other aspects of a conflict have faded into history.

The past year has been one of progress in the field of human rights, especially in strengthening the United Nations system to uphold and further develop the international code of human rights. In October 1999 the General Assembly adopted the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which has now been signed by 62 Member States, including Croatia. It will enter into force before the end of the year. Nevertheless, of the many remaining challenges, the trafficking of women needs to be dealt with. Additionally, the integration into economic and developmental policies of the world's disabled population remains to be achieved.

The legal protection of children at the international level has been one of the United Nations success stories, with the Convention on the Rights of the Child being the most universally ratified instrument. However, Croatia believes that the issue of the protection of children is yet to adequately filter through to the regional and local levels, particularly in regard to overcoming inequities in the promotion of education. The Organization has a role to play in this process.

The final judgement on globalization cannot yet be made. Rather, we have numerous interim observations as to its characteristics, benefits and negative effects. In this regard, the adoption by the Economic and Social Council of the Ministerial Declaration on the potential of information and communication technologies to achieve development goals and the need to bridge the digital divide represents an important contribution by the United Nations.

In the same vein, the preparations for the high-level event on financing for development to be held next year are proceeding well. The broad-ranging consultations presently being carried out involving the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization, among other key world economic actors, augur well for the necessary broad-based ownership of the outcome of that United Nations-driven event.

Croatia remains fully committed to having the finances of the Organization placed on a sound, sustainable and equitable basis. In that regard, we look forward to the reform process relating to both the regular and the peacekeeping scales, ultimately resulting in the reaffirmation of the capacity-to-pay principle as the basis for the contributions of Member States. Similarly, Croatia supports the strengthening and revitalization of the Organization, including the reform of its principle organs. Croatia believes that due regard should be given to restoring the careful balance between the principal organs of the United Nations, particularly with regard to that between the General Assembly and the Security Council.

Mr. Wang Yingfan (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): First of all, I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive and very informative annual report on the work of the Organization. The report covers in detail all aspects of the Organization's work in the past year and deserves our careful study.

At the just-concluded Millennium Summit of the United Nations, heads of State or Government of Member States reviewed and summarized the United Nations' experiences in the past 55 years and adopted the United Nations Millennium Declaration, reiterating their commitment to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter. Having drawn a blueprint for the work of the Organization in the new century and the new millennium, the Summit has offered important guidance for our work.

I would like to focus my statement today on three questions. I will first address the matter of peacekeeping.

As the Secretary-General indicated in his report,

> "Sustainable peace and security for all countries and peoples remains a central objective of the United Nations." (*A/55/1, para. 29*)

In the new situation, peacekeeping operations remain an important means for the United Nations to fulfil its obligations in safeguarding international peace and security. Experience in recent years has shown that the Security Council's role in that field is irreplaceable and its authority unquestionable.

The Security Council's responsibility and political leadership in peacekeeping should therefore be preserved and strengthened further. At the same time, the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter — as well as other long-established peacekeeping principles such as neutrality, the consent of the parties to the conflict, and using force only in self-defence — should continue to be observed.

Despite its contribution to international peace and security, peacekeeping is by no means a panacea. In order to enable United Nations peacekeeping operations to be more effective we must address both the symptoms and the root causes of problems. In other words, we must try to root out the real causes of conflict. In that connection, we hope that the United Nations will attach real importance to the situation in Africa and increase its involvement so as to resolve issues related to that continent.

As for the dilemma of intervention, the Chinese delegation is of the view that, as the United Nations shoulders a primary responsibility for maintaining world peace, it should make more positive contributions to stopping massive humanitarian crises and preventing tragic massive killings of innocent civilians. At the same time, however, we are also fully aware of the complexity of international intervention and the risk of inappropriate intervention. Any intervention must be authorized by the Security Council and should be aimed at eliminating the root causes of a conflict rather than at delaying its settlement, and at facilitating reconciliation between parties to a conflict rather than at fuelling hatred and confrontation. Big powers and blocs of countries should respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of a country involved in a conflict rather than use humanitarian intervention to interfere in its internal affairs or to trigger new conflicts.

In the past year, the United Nations witnessed a rapid increase both in the number and scale of new peacekeeping operations. But peacekeeping efforts in Sierra Leone and other places have not yielded the expected results, which has highlighted problems in current peacekeeping operations and the need for reform. In that connection, the report submitted by the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations designated by the Secretary-General is very timely. The Chinese delegation appreciates the efforts of Ambassador Brahimi and other members of the Panel. We believe that the report has put forward a series of thoughtful recommendations on how to improve United Nations peacekeeping operations, which we believe deserve in-depth study by relevant bodies of the United Nations. Recommendations that enjoy broad agreement and are easy to put in place should be implemented in a timely manner. We look forward to discussions on the report, and we are ready to make due contributions to the peacekeeping operations of the United Nations.

Secondly, I would like to speak about development. Another important task for the United Nations is to respond actively to globalization and realize the common development of mankind. The surging tide of globalization has brought us immense challenges as well as opportunities. Developing countries have borne the brunt of the negative effects of that tide. The United Nations must therefore play its due role in narrowing the gap between the poor and the rich and in promoting common prosperity in the international community, so as to ensure that all countries benefit equally from globalization and to prevent the further widening of the gap between the North and the South and the polarization of the world.

The United Nations should give top priority to the issue of development, greatly increase — rather than decrease — its allocation of resources in that field and really make the eradication of poverty its most important development objective today, as indicated in the Secretary-General's report. We appreciate the great efforts and achievements already made by the United Nations in this regard. It is our hope that it will, as required by the new situation, make an in-depth study of the negative impacts of globalization on the endeavour to eradicate poverty. The United Nations Millennium Declaration has put forward many specific objectives for poverty eradication. We hope that the Secretariat will submit as soon as possible detailed implementation measures, so that those measures will not merely remain on paper for ever.

Thirdly, global strategic stability is the foundation on which world security rests, and the 1972 Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems (ABM) is an important cornerstone for global

strategic stability. The adoption by the General Assembly of the resolution on Preservation of and Compliance with the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems at its fifty-fourth session (A/RES/54/54) by an overwhelming majority represents the call by the majority of countries in the world for certain countries to preserve and strictly observe the ABM Treaty. The United Nations should continue to pay serious attention to the efforts by a country to develop a national defence system to the detriment of global strategic stability and to take the necessary measures to forestall any further development of this dangerous move. The illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons has caused serious security, economic and social problems for developing countries in general and African countries in particular. The international community should take advantage of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, to be held next year as well as its preparatory process, to work for an early solution to this issue.

Mr. Dangue Rewaka (Gabon), Vice-President, took the Chair.

We are confident that with the concerted efforts of all Member States, the United Nations, as the most representative and most important intergovernmental organization in today's world, will display new vitality in the new century, guided by the purposes and principles set forth in the Charter.

Mr. Vohidov (Uzbekistan) *(spoke in Russian)*: Allow me first of all to congratulate the President on his election to this important and responsible post. We are sure that under his leadership this historic Millennium Assembly will achieve impressive results.

I would also like to associate myself with all of those who have expressed gratitude to the President of the fifty-fourth session, His Excellency Mr. Theo-Ben Gurirab, for the effective organization of its work and also for the preparation of the Millennium Summit.

Allow me also to thank the Secretary-General for his report on the work of the Organization, which contains many valuable ideas on virtually all aspects of the activity of our community. The proposals and concepts contained in the report deserve the most careful study. Given time constraints my statement will dwell in greater detail on those issues which, in the context of the problems of the epoch of globalization, require the most intensive attention from the international community and which are of particular concern to our Republic.

The present session of the Assembly, which is most significant and symbolic in nature, is taking place with the enhanced and intensive attention by the international community — attention to pressing problems of the international agenda, which we will be discussing during the next few months.

The fifty-fifth session began its work with the historic Millennium Summit, an international forum which had the participation of an unprecedented number of heads of State and Government. This demonstrates our shared desire to reach a level of understanding of the historic changes taking place, an awareness of the all-pervasive interdependence of today's world and to demonstrate our dedication to the fundamental principles enshrined in the Charter.

We fully share the provision in the report of the Secretary-General to the effect that one of the fundamental problems of today's world, on the eve of the new century, remains the need to ensure international security and stability. We are firmly convinced that the leading role here must be played by the United Nations as the most authoritative and universal international organization.

Today, it is quite obvious that, in the present conditions of globalization when the world is closely interlinked and united, there can be no comprehensive international security without the achievement of security of regions and the national security of individual States. We believe that the principle of globalism will continue to remain one of the fundamental and pivotal criteria for the processes of disarmament and non-proliferation. Here, Uzbekistan favours strict and unswerving compliance by all States with the international regime of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. Without that it is impossible to speak of strategic stability on either the global or the regional level.

However, along with the principle of globalism, in the process of nuclear disarmament, the important significance of regional factors is becoming obvious, factors which can, to a significant extent, both promote and block a strengthening of the comprehensive nuclear non-proliferation regime and disarmament. Here there is a need to emphasize that the establishment, on the initiative of States of the region,

of nuclear-weapon-free zones is a substantive contribution to strengthening the non-proliferation regime, disarmament, and above all to the process of the maintenance of international peace and security.

What is of particular significance is the international legal legitimization of Uzbekistan's initiative on the establishment in Central Asia of a nuclear-weapon-free zone. We highly value the efforts of the Secretary-General, the Department of Disarmament Affairs, headed by Under-Secretary-General, Mr. Dhanapala, and also the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific to support the present process for the establishment of this zone and, in particular, support for the activity of the regional expert group working on the conclusion of the draft treaty on a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia.

As was noted by the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Mr. Islam Karimov, during the Millennium Summit, today's challenges and risks require a dynamic adaptation of all of the United Nations systems and mechanisms to the complex realities and prospects and to drawing up new approaches to ensure peace, security and stability.

In our view, the need for the reform of the United Nations means the adoption of a range of measures to enhance its role and significance, above all in resolving regional and global problems.

In that context, we believe that there is a need for reform of the Security Council through expansion of the number of its permanent members, including both developed and developing countries. Germany and Japan, which have reaffirmed their important role in global policy and, what is also important, who are major sponsors for financing the activity of the United Nations and many projects and programmes for humanitarian and peacekeeping, have a full right to be represented among the permanent members of the Council.

Furthermore, we find it important to ensure effectiveness of the Secretary-General in reacting to global and regional challenges through the expansion of his competence.

We agree that there is a need for further enhancement of the role and responsibility of the Security Council in issues of preventing armed conflicts, the effective use of instruments and mechanisms for a peaceful solution to disputes, including the use for conflict resolution — in particular for conflicts that continue a long time — of the so-called mechanism of peace enforcement.

As was noted by the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan in his statement at the Millennium Summit, in today's world we find that the remnants of the cold war are now being replaced by international terrorism and extremism and by aggressive nationalism and separatism as dangerous detonators undermining peace and stability. We must recognize that terrorism has been transformed into one of the major challenges and threats to international security and stability of our time. Here, we hope that this question will be given the highest priority in the activity of our Organization.

As to the relevance and urgency of escalating the international community's campaign against the rising threat of international terrorism, Uzbekistan welcomes the Secretary-General's proposal of convening an international conference to combat terrorism under United Nations auspices. The time has come to make it very clear that terrorism and extremism can be counteracted only by the organization of a campaign against not only their manifestations, but above all against those international centres that, endowed with enormous financial and other resources, are training and exporting terrorists whom they provide with the most up-to-date technical means, weapons and financing.

The anti-terrorism campaign requires coordinated international efforts and broad acknowledgement of the rights of States to protect their citizens from terrorist attacks. These provisions demonstrate the relevance of a consideration of Uzbekistan's initiative for the establishment, under United Nations auspices, of an international centre to combat terrorism, as put forward by President Islam Karimov at the Istanbul Summit of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. In this respect, Uzbekistan once again calls on the Members of the Organization to support that initiative and to begin its practical implementation as soon as possible.

The Secretary-General's report focuses significant attention on the issue of the drug threat. This problem is far-ranging and further exacerbated by the current upsurge of the two most dangerous phenomena of our times: international terrorism and the drug trade. Billions of dollars of income from the

illicit trade in drugs serve to provide financial support to international terrorism. Here, of great significance is the implementation, not in words but in deeds, of the agreement of the States of the Group of 8 to root out the sources of funding for terrorist activity.

The Millennium Declaration, which defines the major areas for joint efforts in the twenty-first century, is the expression of the determination of the Organization's Members to take agreed measures to combat States' international terrorism and to redouble their efforts to implement their commitments to check the universal drug problem. We are convinced that the international high-level conference, entitled "Enhancing Security and Stability in Central Asia: an Integrated Approach to Counter Drugs, Organized Crime and Terrorism" — which is being organized jointly by the United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention, the OSCE and the Government of Uzbekistan and is to take place in Tashkent on 19 and 20 October — will make a positive contribution to the implementation of the commitments that have been undertaken.

In conclusion, I wish once again to reaffirm the fundamental concept of the Secretary-General's report that, on the threshold of the new millennium, we must yet again assume our responsibilities and exploit the historic momentum to overcome existing differences and obstacles, unite our efforts to achieve our noble goals and free our planet of devastating wars and conflict and ecological, social and economic crises and cataclysms.

Mr. Samhan (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me at the outset to express our appreciation for the efforts of the Secretary-General in his management of the work of the United Nations. We also wish to offer our thanks for his report, contained in document A/55/1, and for the valuable information it contains, which clearly reflects this Organization's role in facing the ever-increasing international challenges and problems.

The Secretary-General's comments in his report embody ideas and proposals that could contribute to the development of the activities of the United Nations within the framework of its mandate under the Charter. Prominent among these activities is the maintenance of international peace and security. The United Arab Emirates attaches great importance to the role of our international Organization in containing conflicts between or within States and agrees with the Secretary-General's concept of collective security, as laid out in paragraph 31 of his report. This approach encompasses gross abuses of human rights, large-scale displacement of civilian populations, international terrorism, the AIDS pandemic, drug and arms trafficking and environmental disasters, in addition to the vast gap that exists between the developed and developing countries in economic, social and human development. By necessity, this issue calls for international unity in the search for objective solutions to these problems at the national, regional and international levels.

The cooperation of States and their commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter and to the protocols of international law and other international instruments governing international relations are essential to conflict-prevention and peace-building. We therefore support the Secretary-General's efforts to improve the capacities of the United Nations, in cooperation with regional and international organizations, to contain wars and disputes. We also support his view that

> "Peace-building in practice involves initiatives to help promote national reconciliation and justice, respect for human rights and the rule of law." *(A/55/1, para. 94)*

The Secretary-General's report points out that, while the past year has seen an enormous increase in United Nations peacekeeping operations, some of these have failed because the parties to the conflicts have lacked the necessary political will, in addition to the administrative and financial problems inherent in any peacekeeping operation. We therefore support the positive and constructive proposals and recommendations of the Secretary-General that have been included in the report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations, chaired by Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi. We call for a methodical allocation of human and financial resources to the promotion of the various civilian, humanitarian and judiciary efforts being made to contain the repercussions of these conflicts, such as the repatriation of displaced persons; the accelerated reintegration of ex-combatants into civil society; addressing violations of human rights — including of those suffering under occupation — and bringing their perpetrators to justice; the protection of international civil servants in the field; and the provision of international political and financial support to States in

order to establish stability and sustainable economic and social development.

The Secretary-General has pointed out in paragraphs 102, 103 and 104 of his report that disarmament — in particular the elimination of weapons of mass destruction and nuclear weapons — is an important element of United Nations strategy to ensure the security and safety of countries and peoples. The United Arab Emirates believes in the right of States, particularly small countries, to enhance their defence capabilities so as to address their regional security concerns and preserve their sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence. At the same time, however, the United Arab Emirates does not support States whose policies aim at possessing prohibited weapons — leading to escalation of tension and instability at the international and regional levels. We therefore call upon those States to reconsider their positions and to follow more transparent and objective policies that will lead to finding just and lasting peaceful solutions to the conflicts between them and their neighbours, in accordance with the principles of international legitimacy.

We also support the Secretary-General's call to follow up on the promising results of the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). In response to this call, nuclear-weapon States should gradually eliminate their nuclear arsenals. This will promote the stability and security of the international environment.

Chapter II of the Secretary-General's report on meeting humanitarian commitments reviews clearly the activities undertaken by the United Nations and its specialized agencies — namely, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Children's Fund, the World Health Organization and the Food and Agriculture Organization. These agencies play prominent roles in providing humanitarian relief and assistance, as well as developmental, educational, environmental and economic assistance, and in combating disease and dealing with natural disasters in many countries, particularly in the least developed countries.

We appreciate all constructive and positive efforts made by those specialized agencies in these fields, including the efforts of the Red Cross and Red Crescent societies. To support these humanitarian and developmental efforts, the international community, particularly the developed countries, need to provide financial and technical assistance and to help these agencies meet their responsibilities. The international community also needs to provide assistance to affected countries, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

We agree fully with the Secretary-General's assessment of the prevailing social and economic conditions, including the poverty and debt problems faced by many developing countries — particularly the poorest among them. The report captures precisely the kinds of challenges and problems that these countries face — challenges and problems that have sparked civil and regional wars.

Given this reality, the international community should accord these problems and their consequences the important consideration they deserve. This could be done by establishing an equitable and just economic order — an order that the developing countries themselves would participate in formulating — so as to bring stability and growth to the international economic situation.

The very important recommendations and proposals of the historic Millennium Summit, held at the beginning of this month, emphasized the significant role that the United Nations plays in the current international climate. This Organization is the natural and right forum to deal with international global issues and the need to promote its purposes and principles, particularly in the light of multifaceted globalization and the many other changes in current international relations. We should therefore restructure the United Nations and improve its financial and human resources and its various activities, so as to allow the Organization to carry out its important tasks, including dealing with current conflicts, peace-building and bringing about sustainable development for the good of humanity as a whole.

Mr. Fonseca (Brazil): I wish to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on the work of the Organization. It is an excellent guide for us, and it shows how the mandates created by the Member States are being translated into the day-to-day work of the United Nations machinery.

The United Nations has sought to respond to the new challenges of the world. Peacekeeping operations have taken on more tasks and responsibilities to meet the increased complexity of the situations on the

ground. New programmes have been set up under the aegis of the United Nations to cope with the problems that respect no national boundaries.

The Organization has also taken measures to help in the eradication of poverty, illiteracy and contagious disease. The efforts to combat AIDS are an example in this regard.

The Global Compact initiative has become an important innovation aimed at forging a broad-based coalition for change. We all know that Governments alone cannot do much. The involvement of civil society, non-governmental organizations and the private sector is key to advancing the objectives of the United Nations in many fields, including development and respect for fundamental human rights. These examples show that the United Nations is in fact moving in the right direction.

The Millennium Summit was an opportunity to recommit ourselves to strengthening the mechanisms to deal with the new and sometimes contradictory forces that shape our times. The Millennium Summit offered an opportunity for world leaders to take stock of the achievements of multilateralism as well as of the challenges ahead. The holding of the Summit was in itself a success and reflected the prestige of the Organization and its Secretary-General.

The statements made at the Summit, the discussions at the round tables and the Declaration adopted have once again set lofty goals for the Organization. Now it is time to address those goals in the daily business of the Organization. As the Secretary-General rightly put it, now is the moment to start converting into action the bold pledges that our heads of State and Government made. The problem is how to do this, how to overcome the shallow consensus on general principles and start taking concrete steps towards the implementation of the commitments.

There are already concrete proposals on the table with regard to peacekeeping operations. The Brahimi report is the result of a comprehensive review of the work of the Organization in this field. The Deputy Secretary-General is now preparing a plan of implementation for the consideration of Member States.

Brazil welcomes these initiatives. Our peace operations have grown in number and complexity, stretching the capacity of the Organization to respond efficiently to the new mandates.

As stated in the Brahimi report, the mandates must be clear, credible and achievable. We need to be sure that the mandate of a peacekeeping operation fits the specific requirements of a given situation. It is clear that the final decision is always based on political evaluation. Nevertheless, we can improve the odds of success if the mandate is also based on reliable information and solid technical advice. To that end, the recommendation to reinforce the capacity of the Secretariat to gather and analyse information is welcome and should be given due consideration. We must increase the number of officers in the Secretariat that provide guidance for troops and police officers. In addition, much trouble and frustration could be avoided if we applied the very simple idea that it is better not to establish a mission than to establish one that is flawed from its inception.

A meaningful implementation of even a few recommendations of the report will require substantial additional resources. We need to identify carefully the best way to get the resources that are required.

The Millennium Summit has also set priorities in terms of eradication of poverty and development. Unfortunately, we do not have at our disposal a set of recommendations in the areas of poverty eradication and development that are comparable to those in the Brahimi report (A/55/305) in the area of peacekeeping.

We have pledged to halve, by the year 2015, the proportion of the world's people whose income is less that one dollar a day and the proportion of people who suffer from hunger. But how are we supposed to do that? Should we do that alone, at the national level? What kind of cooperation is required at the international level?

If we want globalization to be a blessing, and not a curse on developing countries, we must tackle the flagrant imbalances in international flows of trade and investments. Efforts both at the international and national levels are necessary. Increased international cooperation for development must be coupled with sound political systems and respect for human rights at the national level.

In order to eradicate poverty, a more favourable international environment must be combined with a

renewed national commitment to place the individual at the centre of the development process.

The Millennium Summit proved that the United Nations is the sole legitimate tool for international action. The Summit showed that the values and ideals embodied in the United Nations are by no means outmoded. The strengthening of the multilateral bodies is the only possible direction. Our task is therefore to meet the expectations raised by the Summit through the reinvigoration of multilateralism in all its aspects.

Mr. Valdez Carrillo (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of Peru would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report on the work of the Organization (A/55/1). His report depicts the situation of the United Nations in its different domains, as well as the challenges that the international community must confront at the beginning of the new century.

It reminds us of the complexity of the task, with its economic, social, humanitarian and ultimately political dimensions, that we must tackle in this millennium, as well as the importance that the Member States of the United Nations, collectively and individually, attach to stability, international peace and security.

From the beginning Peru has predicated its participation in the Organization on a firm commitment to the principles and objectives contained in the Charter. But even beyond that, my country has consistently displayed the particular importance it attaches to multilateral action, whether regional or global, in resolving international problems.

This essentially principled attitude is supported by our activities at the bilateral level, and it is displayed in the agreements on the demarcation of borders and other issues relating to good-neighbourliness that were pending with Ecuador and Chile. Along with our conviction about the importance of peace, our steps in negotiations with those countries were guided by a conviction concerning the impact of these agreements on the social and economic development of our countries and the region, as they would relax tension and reduce military spending.

This is why I would like to emphasize the importance of the effort that the international community must carry out in a gradual and realistic process moving towards general disarmament, which is a moral and pragmatic imperative that we must always keep in our sights. However, my delegation would like to reaffirm that in the final analysis overall security can only be achieved through the equitable development of all nations. I would like to highlight the fact that there is no greater contribution to a lasting peace than the promotion of development. I would have liked to see in the report a closer relation between these two lofty values.

The principles of the Charter conferred upon the United Nations a fundamental orientation, the scope and magnitude of which produce an ever-vital and forceful mandate for its organs. But, this mandate, with new circumstances, has been developing through the emergence of new concepts and even interpretations of the Charter, which can be seen through the practices of the Security Council, such as preventive deployment.

In crafting the mandates for the establishment of some peacekeeping operations, faithfulness to the principles of the Charter has not been evident, nor has a respect for the specific tasks of each and every organ of the United Nations, particularly the General Assembly, which has the highest participation and therefore is the most democratic organ in the system.

My delegation is also prepared to collaborate with the new proposals of the Secretary-General and will carefully study the proposals in the Brahimi report so as to render more effective the work of the United Nations in this vital area aimed at protecting the survival of States and the security and well-being of their populations, as well as respect for their fundamental human rights.

We agree with the priority that the Secretary-General has attached to preventive action in international conflicts, as well as the importance of strengthening the Secretariat in peacekeeping operations. However, my delegation wishes to call attention to the increase of costs consonant with the increase of the number of operations and the excessive impact these have on countries such as mine, when costs, incurred without its participation, have to be faced with tremendous difficulties.

My delegation would also like to express solidarity with the great sacrifices of the staff of the United Nations, who have been praised for their efforts to preserve peace and respect for collective human rights, threatened as they have been in East Timor, Sierra Leone, Congo, Eritrea and Ethiopia. Our country

has a personal commitment to each one of these important activities of the Organization.

We support the Secretary-General in seeking new consensus and new instruments and mechanisms to make the United Nations more effective in complying and carrying out its fundamental mandate. The great complexity of the international scene confronts the United Nations with other domains of action which involve problems that are more of a social and economic nature. We would like to have seen cases in which preventive diplomacy was used to resolve the problems.

This intense activity of the United Nations in the preservation and building of peace shows that, unfortunately, the passing of the cold war has not brought the peace dividend that the international community had hoped for.

On the contrary, local conflicts have increased, particularly in certain regions of the planet, like Africa, as the report has highlighted. We have also noted the negative impact of globalization in the economic field, for it has emphasized the gap between rich and poor. This implies the danger of greater marginalization for a broad swath of humanity, with respect to the positive economic momentum that others are enjoying as a result of the use of technology.

In this context of seeking new instruments and parameters for action, we must remember that cooperation for development remains the condition of survival for our countries as a decisive instrument in bringing about the well-being of our peoples, as set forth in the Charter.

Peru agrees with the need to consider the eradication of poverty as one of the most important objectives of the United Nations and its specialized agencies, as the only international organization whose mandate includes peace, security, the well-being of populations, development and human rights.

The United Nations has a unique opportunity to tackle comprehensively the eradication of poverty. All Member States have the responsibility to attain the objective set out in the Millennium Declaration: to reduce absolute poverty by 50 per cent by 2015. Peru's national strategy has enabled us to halt, stabilize and reduce poverty levels. In Peru, the incidence of extreme poverty was reduced from 27 per cent to 14 per cent between 1990 and 1997. Poor countries such as mine, which have been making a determined effort to solve this grave problem, cannot fail to be pleased that the Organization is attaching growing importance to poverty reduction.

Peru is gratified at the ever greater and more effective coordination among all United Nations bodies on poverty eradication, and at the suitable follow-up to the agreements reached at United Nations conferences on social development issues. But I must make it clear that this objective cannot in any way be de-linked from sustainable growth or from participatory social development focusing on the serious problem of unemployment, which is one of the major causes of poverty and of the deteriorating quality of life in our countries. Hence, proper and ongoing consideration of matters related to development financing, including trade, is of enormous importance, because without the necessary resources it will be impossible to attain our economic-growth objectives along with social development.

Peru would have preferred the report of the Secretary-General to have devoted more attention to this important matter and to have laid greater stress on such substantive issues as protectionism in trade, the excessive external-debt burden and the conditions for repayment, and adequate levels of official development assistance that are commensurate with the commitments made to us. Moreover, we would have liked to see more analysis of factors for foreign investment and, especially, of the inequities faced by developing countries in the international financial, monetary and trading system. All these matters, which are closely linked to issues of development, deserve priority attention from the United Nations.

We must also comment on the report's material on sustainable development. We fully agree with the objectives set out in the report, and we agree that the problems are complex and multifaceted. We are pleased at the progress that has been made in a variety of very important areas, for example, with the negotiation of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Still, we would have preferred a stronger approach to the commitments that have been made on climate change, including a recommendation on the rapid entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. We also have difficulties with the report's

correlation of environment and trade. These matters deserve deeper study and careful treatment. Peru cannot accept it being so freely suggested that there is complementarity between the environment and trade policy without the existence of clear consensus within the World Trade Organization.

Mr. Ka (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): Let me begin by noting that today's meeting on the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/55/1) is unique because it is taking place just following the historic Millennium Summit, which brought together in this very Hall an unprecedented 150 heads of State or Government, who came to discuss the central issue of the role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century.

In his millennium report (A/54/2000), the Secretary-General wrote with great insight and relevance of a vision of the Organization, with an overview of the many challenges and issues we absolutely must confront as a community of nations. The goal of the proposals and actions set out in that report is to bring about peace, security, stability and active solidarity among nations and among peoples.

The specific ideas and proposals that appear in the Millennium Declaration will make possible an agreed vision for a United Nations that is better equipped and better able to confront the changing realities of today's world.

One of the great challenges facing this first session of the new millennium obviously relates to our ability to pool our efforts and our energies to ensure the progressive and realistic implementation of the decisions adopted by our heads of State or Government, in the context of a worldwide united front. We must remember that the citizens of the world were witness to the solemn commitments undertaken by our leaders, and that they all expect the resolutions and priorities adopted by those leaders to have an impact on their daily lives. We must therefore feed the flame of the Summit and, most important, maintain the "millennium spirit".

To that end, I wish to discuss a number of matters that seem to be critical parts of our response to these issues. First of all, as observed by many of our heads of State or Government both during the Millennium Summit and during their round table discussions, the first challenge is globalization. That phenomenon has created a new situation in international relations by eradicating national borders and forming a single space, a global village whose heartbeat has a fundamental effect on the way our peoples live.

Globalization offers many opportunities but, for the present, only a handful of rich countries are benefiting from them, while the vast majority of countries run the risk of increasing marginalization. We should therefore try to make a united contribution to ensure that the process becomes a positive force for all the world's peoples, and not a one-way phenomenon that exacerbates injustice and inequity between the wealthy, prosperous and dominant North and a South that grows ever poorer and that lacks any prospect of real development.

Because the United Nations embodies the aspiration of the world's peoples to live in peace and achieve economic and social progress, it must urgently set about rectifying the process of globalization by searching for appropriate solutions, perhaps through an international conference on globalization that would be intended first and foremost to encourage the globalization of prosperity rather than the globalization of poverty.

It is also incumbent upon us to confront another challenge, no less important: the maintenance of international peace and security, which remains a distant goal if we think of the many harmful and varied conflicts that are endangering the very structure of States in many places, not to mention the suffering they impose on civilian populations. My delegation will return to the causes of these conflicts, particularly those that darken the skies of Africa, when the General Assembly examines the recommendations of the Working Group on conflicts in Africa.

I would just like to say today that these crises are fostered, fed and above all maintained by the illicit proliferation and the circulation of small arms and light weapons, as well as by anti-personnel mines. Combating these terrible scourges requires general mobilization, concerted actions and energetic initiatives on our part to bring about their definitive elimination.

In the same vein, we must attach particular importance to the Brahimi report (A/55/305) on United Nations peace operations, whose recommendations set out very appropriate conditions for a better peacekeeping doctrine that is more in keeping with the realities of today's world.

The reform of the Security Council is, in this context, another requirement, and it means transforming that central organ, entrusted with the preservation of international peace and security, into a more representative, democratic, transparent and credible organ. My delegation will return to these issues when we consider the report of the Working Group on Security Council reform and the Brahimi report.

If we wish to shape the United Nations into a modern tool, capable of responding to the priorities of the twenty-first century, we must quite obviously strengthen the role of the General Assembly and rationalize the work of the other principal organs; but all Member States must also pay, without conditions and on time, their budgetary contributions.

We encourage the United Nations to continue, more than it has in the past, to commit itself to coordinating its activities with those of international financial institutions such as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the World Trade Organization.

Today we are living a grave paradox. It is commonly said that never before has the world accumulated so much prosperity and advanced through so many stages of scientific and technical progress. Nevertheless, more than 800 million people do not get enough to eat and 1.2 billion live in abject poverty, suffering from illiteracy, unemployment, diseases and pandemics such as AIDS and malaria.

This situation stabs our conscience, for we know that the means to eradicate poverty and its related scourges exist and that all we need is a world coalition driven by a genuine will to do something about this by increasing official development assistance, cancelling debt and coordinating the struggle against all the major diseases.

At the dawn of this new century and in the spirit of the Millennium Declaration, the Member States of our Organization must concretely forge an alliance or create a new partnership for development to make the twenty-first century the century of the world coalition for shared prosperity. This is a daring challenge that we must meet if we wish to build a fairer and more equitable new international human order. It is also a reasonable step to take if we truly wish to contribute to eliminating the causes of conflicts, and therefore instability in the world.

In conclusion, as our heads of State and Government have done before me, gathered here in the solemn framework of the Millennium Summit, I wish to emphasize and reaffirm once again the irreplaceable role of the United Nations in the new ordering of the political, economic and cultural life of our global society. The United Nations and its system can help make this global society more humane by devising solutions that will guide the future of humanity.

We have no choice today but to take this road of hope that necessarily passes through the consolidation of multilateralism and universalism.

Mr. Hasmy (Malaysia): My delegation is grateful to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive and thoughtful report on the work of the Organization (A/55/1). We commend him for raising important issues of concern to the international community, even when a number of them may be contentious. They must be seriously addressed by Member States, especially in the light of the expectations raised during the Millennium Summit.

Clearly, in spite of ongoing efforts, challenges to the Organization remain, especially in situations of crisis in many parts of the world. In facing these crises, there should be more concerted efforts on the part of the international community to pool resources and to coordinate responses for maximum impact. Clearly, also building a culture of prevention, as has been espoused by the Secretary-General, is much more beneficial, long-lasting and less costly than reacting to disasters, whether natural or man-made.

Increased and more effective cooperation and coordination among the various United Nations and other international agencies is especially important in responding to these many challenges. However, these responses must be made in a way that will not expose the United Nations to charges of selectivity or bias. This is important to ensure the credibility of and respect for the Organization.

The Secretary-General has also touched on the "dilemma of intervention" and noted the strong reactions by Member States to the issue of humanitarian intervention, which he had first raised in his report to the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly. He was right in saying that in essence the problem is one of responsibility in the face of massive violation of human rights when human lives are at stake. This is a question that we must ponder together,

and we must come to a general understanding on what ought to be our collective response to these situations. Clearly, the international community cannot sit idly by in the face of such massive humanitarian tragedies. Against this, however, is the imperative to adhere to the principles of the United Nations Charter, particularly relating to the principles of non-interference in the internal affairs of States and respect for their sovereignty.

The challenge before us is to strike a proper balance so as to ensure that while human lives are saved, State sovereignty is not being trampled underfoot. We continue to believe that while the issue is a contentious one, there should be a frank and in-depth discussion of the concept. We believe in generating a healthy debate on the subject, not in stifling it. However, in doing so we must be guided by the principles enshrined in the Charter and must not put them aside, as they provide the very basis upon which the United Nations was founded. Support for human rights should not be at the expense of the sovereign rights of States.

The Secretary-General is to be commended for establishing the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations, chaired by Ambassador Brahimi, for the purpose of undertaking a major review of United Nations peace operations and recommending improvements to existing arrangements. We commend the Panel for its comprehensive report and bold recommendations, which deserve the serious and urgent consideration of Member States. We agree with the Secretary-General and the Panel that United Nations peacekeeping operations must be drastically revamped to ensure their effectiveness and viability in the context of the contemporary conflict situations in which they operate. Clearly, much needs to be done, not the least of which is the urgent need to strengthen the severely understaffed Department of Peacekeeping Operations with the requisite human resources. Equally important is the need to increase resources for effective peacekeeping on the ground, both in terms of its financing and in the availability of troops contributed by Member States.

In the final analysis, the viability of peacekeeping operations rests on the twin issues of money and people. Current and future peacekeeping operations are a dynamic process. They have become increasingly multidisciplinary in character in response to the increasingly complex nature of contemporary conflicts. We believe that a multidisciplinary or holistic approach would address not only the symptoms of conflicts but, more importantly, their underlying causes, which are often socio-economic in nature.

Sanctions remain a legitimate and legal instrument to coerce States to conform to internationally accepted behaviour and norms of inter-State conduct. Unfortunately, they often exert a heavy toll on the populace, as is graphically illustrated by the continuing grave humanitarian situation in Iraq today. The international community must come to grips with this issue, so as to ease the sufferings of the Iraqi people, even as it addresses the question of peace and security and the unresolved issues of Kuwaiti and third-country missing nationals and Kuwaiti property. All of those issues must be brought to closure if normalcy is to return to that region.

My delegation is encouraged by the current efforts in the Security Council to move in the direction of more focused and targeted sanctions — the so-called smart sanctions — and to turn away from debilitating comprehensive sanctions, which clearly are a form of collective punishment. Sanctions in the future — if, and when, imposed as absolutely necessary — should have specific objectives, be clearly targeted and have specified timeframes. They should be lifted as soon as they have served their purpose and are no longer pertinent to the situation, as should have been done in respect of the sanctions imposed on Libya and the Sudan.

Disarmament will remain a matter of paramount importance to the international community for as long as weapons — whether nuclear or conventional — remain the main threat to peace, security and the well being of humanity on the planet. My delegation is particularly concerned by the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons but also chemical and biological ones. We should be even more resolved during this century to work collectively for their complete elimination. In that regard, we strongly commend the Secretary-General for drawing attention to the dangers posed by the development and testing of long-range missiles, as well as to the danger posed by the possible deployment of national missile defences. We share the concern of many countries that the deployment of such a defence system could precipitate a new arms race and undermine nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation efforts.

My delegation continues to attach importance to the historic Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legality of the threat and use of nuclear weapons. We regret that, to date, there has been very little serious effort to pursue in good faith and conclude negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament. Efforts in that direction at the Conference on Disarmament continue to be thwarted by the nuclear-weapon States. The prospects of a nuclear-free world have become even more dismal with the arrival on the scene of new nuclear Powers.

While we welcome the outcome of the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, in particular the unequivocal undertaking of the nuclear-weapon States towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons, we remain highly sceptical about the political will to follow up on those commitments. The track record of the nuclear-weapon States does not inspire much confidence; it is long in promises but rather short in performance. It remains for the rest of us who do not have, and do not want to have, nuclear weapons to maintain and sustain the campaign for a nuclear-weapon-free world. In that regard, we should strongly support the Secretary-General's call for the convening of an international conference to address the issue of nuclear weapons.

In the realm of conventional weapons, we continue to be dismayed and alarmed by the proliferation and flow of conventional weapons, including small arms, to developing countries, thereby fuelling the wars of the third world, such as those in Africa, whose wars have been characterized by the use of not only small arms but also ever-more sophisticated hi-tech conventional weapons, thanks to the aggressive marketing by the arms merchants of the developed countries. We therefore look forward to the upcoming United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which we hope will address this category of weapons that, incidentally, have killed the greatest number of people in the history of human conflict.

Acts of violence against civilians, which are increasing in number, are clearly unacceptable to the international community and must be strongly condemned whenever and wherever they occur. Those responsible for those dastardly crimes must be brought to book, either through the national justice systems of the countries in which those crimes are committed or, whenever and wherever appropriate, through the relevant international criminal tribunals. Until a global enforcement mechanism is in place to address those crimes, ad hoc tribunals may be required, as and whenever necessary, as in the case of the International Criminal Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda. Those international tribunals and the criminal tribunal to be established in respect of Sierra Leone should be strongly supported by the international community, thereby sending a clear and unambiguous message to potential perpetrators.

Attacks on United Nations and international humanitarian personnel in the field have also been on the increase in recent times. Those acts must be condemned in the strongest terms. The Organization must ensure the safety of personnel as they carry out their noble and selfless tasks in the name of humanity. We have in the past called for appropriate acknowledgement of their contribution by the United Nations, in appreciation of their service. Given the sacrifices they have made, and will continue to make in the name of humanity, we think it fitting that they be honoured in the appropriate way by the United Nations.

The Secretary-General has drawn attention to the costs and benefits of globalization, which continues to be the subject of much debate in this and other international forums. Clearly, globalization is not a panacea, but a challenge to many developing countries, as they begin to integrate their economies into the larger world economy. Indeed, the deepening divisions and development gaps of the contemporary world in the wake of globalization have become even more stark and critical and are a matter of serious concern. If not addressed appropriately, instead of closing the gap between the rich and poor nations, globalization will widen it even further, with dire consequences for developing countries and the health of the world economy. That would certainly be a severe setback to the progress made thus far. For globalization to be accepted by all we will have to ensure the effective participation of all countries in the global trading system and the integration of their social and development objectives within global economic and financial strategies.

My delegation is gratified by the continuing preoccupation with, and the debate on, the globalization issue, as it reflects the deep concern about its effects and impact on the international community, particularly on developing countries.

Those debates here at the United Nations, particularly at the Millennium Summit and in other international forums such as the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization, have sensitised developed countries to the vulnerabilities of the countries of the South. Hopefully, this will engender greater understanding of the problems faced by the countries of the developing world.

In this regard, we would therefore encourage the United Nations to continue to engage these institutions in an ongoing dialogue on these and other important issues. We believe the United Nations can, and should, play a pivotal role in helping to develop an international consensus on many of these issues.

We cannot deny the intrinsic linkage between globalization and development in all its aspects. It is clear that, while global market forces can generate wealth and prosperity, they can also lead to political tensions and instability when the impact on development is patchy or uneven.

In this regard, my delegation looks forward to the upcoming international conference on financing for development, which should address the issue of the development needs of developing countries, particularly those in Africa and the least developed countries in other regions. This conference should, as a matter of top priority, consider ways and means of financing development in the context of the rapidly globalized economy. It should be animated by the philosophy of enlightened self-interest and the proposition that a more prosperous world would be to the benefit of all.

Mr. Lavrov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The fundamental provisions of the report of the Secretary-General attest to the fact that the United Nations — as the President of the Russian Federation, Mr. Vladimir Putin, stated at the Millennium Summit — has learned to resolve, and is resolving, the world's most complex problems.

The highest-level representatives of the international community confirmed, during that historic event, that the United Nations is continuing to play a central role in ensuring peace and stability on both the global and regional level.

We have always believed, and we continue to believe, that a strong and capable United Nations is a key instrument in the search for collective responses to the challenges of our time. We consider the Organization as an irreplaceable forum for the resolution of global problems of security and cooperation, for the formation of a stable, multipolar and democratic world order.

We share the Secretary-General's view that the achievement of sustainable peace and security for all countries and peoples remains as important an objective of the United Nations on the threshold of the twenty-first century as it was at the time of the establishment of the Organization more than half a century ago. At the same time, we have no grounds to be complacent. This refers first and foremost to the multifaceted activity of the United Nations on peacemaking, peacekeeping and peace-building.

Peacekeeping operations indisputably remain one of the high priority areas of activity of the Organization. However, today's large-scale problems in the hotbeds ranging from Africa to the Balkans and to East Timor require a radical improvement of the peacekeeping potential of the United Nations. Russia, for its part, intends actively to promote this.

The Millennium Summit and Assembly have indicated ways to enhance the effectiveness of the United Nations in preventing and settling conflicts in the world. This, inter alia, was the goal of the recommendations in the report by the Brahimi panel under the aegis of the Secretary-General. We share the basic approach, as stated in that document, which obviously will become the subject of comprehensive discussion at this session.

In our view, it is extremely important to step-up and enhance United Nations possibilities for effective deployment of peacekeeping forces. It is obvious that in order to accomplish this it is necessary to achieve the speediest possible conclusion of the formation of the stand-by agreement system.

We cannot fail to agree with the Secretary-General that the peacekeeping structures of the United Nations Secretariat, and, especially, the Department of Peace-keeping Operations, needs to be strengthened.

We are in agreement with those who believe that the international community cannot stand by on the sidelines and look at the pain and suffering of thousands of people and the systematic and gross trampling underfoot of their humanitarian rights.

Unquestionably there is a need to take into account the lessons of the tragedies in Srebrenica and Rwanda.

At the same time, we are convinced that it is impossible to achieve a cessation of violations of international humanitarian law through actions which run counter to the Charter. It is appropriate to recall that in the final documents of the Millennium Summit and meetings of the Security Council at the highest level, there was a reaffirmation of the entire international community's dedication to the strengthening of peace and security in accordance with the principles and purposes of the Charter. It was also emphasized that interaction of the United Nations with the regional organizations must be carried out on the basis of Chapter VIII of the Charter. This means an unambiguous reaffirmation of the exclusive competence of the Council in sanctioning the use of force in international relations. Otherwise, the world will slip towards anarchy and lawlessness when attempts are made to impose order through the right of force under cover of the concept of humanitarian intervention and limited sovereignty. In case of threats or faits accomplis of mass violations of fundamental human rights, the international community must act jointly in accordance with the decision of the Security Council and in strict compliance with the Charter. That, in our view, is the essence of the answer to the dilemma of intervention formulated by the Secretary-General in his report to the Millennium Summit.

We favour the development of norms of international law applicable to the search for effective responses to the humanitarian challenges of our time. Work on the adaptation of international legal norms to new realities must be conducted on a collective basis and on the solid basis of the Charter. Only in that way is it possible to draw up general, clear and universally acceptable criteria, and a legal framework for coercive actions on the part of the international community in the case of emergency humanitarian situations.

We share the assessments of the Secretary-General regarding the growing significance of preventive diplomacy — a strengthening of the culture of conflict prevention which is now coming to replace the culture of response. The international community has acquired a unique arsenal of political and diplomatic means to resolve virtually any international problems. Effective use must be made of it. Work to prevent and to settle through political diplomatic means all kinds of crises must become a central element of international security in the twenty-first century — a central element of efforts to ensure strategic stability.

We believe it is important to continue in-depth consideration of the concept of post-conflict peace-building. We fully agree with the conclusion of the Secretary-General's report regarding the need to improve the procedure for the application of Security Council sanctions in order to enhance the effectiveness and flexibility of sanctions regimes. Sanctions are an extremely powerful means for deterring and preventing conflicts and demand a particularly cautious approach.

I should like once again to emphasize that sanctions imposed by the Security Council should not become a means for punishing countries and peoples, as has unfortunately been the case all too often. In imposing them there needs to be complete clarity of objectives, timely agreement on clear conditions and mechanisms for lifting them, and the possibility for a gradual easing. Sanctions should not lead to destabilization of the economic situation, either within the country that is the objective of the sanctions, or in third countries.

Also deserving of our attention is the strategic policy for the Organization in the area of development, which was emphasized in the report of the Secretary-General, aimed at the elimination of poverty and which provides for the conducting of effective national policy in the social sphere. Of particular importance is the activity of the United Nations to ensure a fairer distribution of benefits from globalization among all countries, inter alia, through ensuring the effective participation of each of them in the international trade system, the strengthening of international financial systems in order to counteract the emergence of crises and to improve access to financial resources for purposes of development.

As noted in the report, the growth, number and the scale of natural disasters requires broader international cooperation in the areas of rendering assistance to populations who have suffered. The objective — as is quite rightly stated — should be to step up the use of scientific and technical achievements with a view to reducing the danger of such disasters.

Once again, we would like to draw attention to the Russian proposals aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of the international potential for responding to natural and man-made disasters. We

believe that, at the outset, the United Nations ought to make an inventory of the existing potential in this field on a country, regional and international level and on this basis produce practical recommendations.

The report rightly emphasizes the intensification of the interaction and complementarity of issues touching on the environment, trade and development. The task of developing the ecological components of the Global Compact is equally pressing. We consider it necessary to keep this issue at the centre of the United Nations attention.

We endorse the thesis set forth in the Secretary-General's report to the effect that the commonwealth of nations is obliged to act in the face of gross violations of human rights. We have clearly seen many instances of how inaction has led, inter alia, to the growing brutality of discrimination against our compatriots in some of the post-Soviet States and to the justification and glorification of fascism. The protection of human rights should be based on universally applicable norms, rather than on political expediency and geostrategic aspirations.

Russia actively supports the enhanced attention of the United Nations to the problems of fighting international terrorism, crime and the illicit drug trade. Throughout this session, we will contribute in every possible way to broadening the legal basis of anti-terrorism cooperation and to the adoption of the convention on transnational organized crime. The Organization should be more active in its anti-corruption work and in creating a universal legal basis for inter-State cooperation in that field.

In general, the report of the Secretary-General, while stimulating creative discussion on ways further to improve the United Nations, confirms yet again the thesis that the relevance and capacity of the Organization's goals and principles to inspire have in no way diminished, but have, if anything, increased. The results of the Millennium Summit and Assembly require us all to coordinate practical measures to ensure more effective use of this unique forum and irreplaceable mechanism of inter-State intercommunication and conflict settlement in our common interests.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.